

# THE ARGOSY.

JULY 1, 1869.

ROLAND YORKE.

A SEQUEL TO "THE CHANNINGS."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE," "GEORGE CANTERBURY'S WILL," &c.

## CHAPTER XXI.

ROLAND YORKE'S SHOULDER TO THE WHEEL.

ROLAND YORKE was hard at work, carrying out his resolve of "putting his shoulder to the wheel." Vague ideas of getting into something good, by which a fortune might be made, floated through his brain in rose-coloured clouds. What the something was to be he did not exactly know; meanwhile, as a preliminary to it, he sought and obtained copying from *Greatorrex* and *Greatorrex*, to be done in spare hours at home. Of which fact Roland (unlike Mr. Brown) made no secret; he talked of it to the whole office; and Mr. Brown supplied him openly.

It was an excessively hot evening, getting now towards dusk. Roland had carried his work to Mrs. Jones's room, not so much because his own parlour was rather close and stuffy as that he might obtain slight intervals of recreative gossip. He had it to himself, however, for Mrs. Jones was absent on household cares. The window looked on a back-yard, in which the maid, who had come out, was hanging up a red table-cover to dry, that had evidently had something spilled on it. Of course Roland arrested his pen to watch the process. He was sitting in his shirt-sleeves, and had just complained aloud that it was hotter than Africa.

"Who did that?" he called out through the open window. "You?"

"Mr. Ollivera, sir. He upset some ink; and mistress have been washing the place out in layers of cold water. She don't think it'll show."

"What d'ye call 'layers'?"

"Different lots, sir. About nineteen bowlfuls she swilled it through; and me a emptying of 'em at the sink, and droring off fresh water ready to her hand."

The hanging-out and pulling the damaged part straight took a tole-

rably long time; Roland, in the old seduction of any amusement being welcome as an accompaniment to work, continued to look on and talk. Suddenly, he remembered his copying, and the young lady for whose sake he had undertaken the labour.

"This is not sticking to it," he soliloquised. "And if I am to have her, I must work for her. *Won't* I work, that's all! I'll stick at it like any brick! But this copying is poor stuff to get a fellow on. If I could slip into something better!"

Considering that Mr. Roland Yorke's earnings the past week, what with mistakes and other failures, had been one shilling and nine-pence, and the week previous to that fifteen-pence, it certainly did not look as though the copying would prove the high road to fortune. He began casting about other projects in his mind, as he wrote.

"If they'd give me a place under Government, it would be the very thing. But they don't. Old Dick Yorke's as selfish as a camel, and Carrick's hiding his head, goodness knows where. So I am thrown on my own resources. Bless us all! when a fellow wants to get on in this world, he can't."

At this juncture Roland came to the end of his paper. As it was a good opportunity for taking a little respite, he laid down his pen, and exercised his thoughts.

"There's those photographing places—lots of them springing up. You can't turn a corner into a street but you come bang upon a fresh establishment. They can't require a fellow to have any previous knowledge, they can't. I wonder if any of them would take me on, and give me a couple of guineas a-week, or so? Nothing to do there but talk to the visitors, and take their faces. I should make a good hand at that. But, perhaps, *she'd* not like it! She might object to marry a man of that sort. What a difficulty it is to get into anything! I must think of the other plan."

The other plan meant some nice place under Government. To Roland that always seemed a sure harbour of refuge. The doubt was, how to get it?

"There's young Dick—Vincent, as he likes to be called now," soliloquised Roland. "I've never asked him to help me, but perhaps he might: he's not ill-natured where his pocket's not in question. I'll go to him to-morrow; see if I don't. Now then! are you dry?"

This was to the writing. Roland rose up to get more paper, and then found that he had left it behind him at the office—some that he ought to have brought home.

"There's a bother! I wonder if I could get it by going round? Of course the offices are closed, but I'd not mind asking Bede for the key if he is in the way."

To think and to act were one with Roland. He put on his coat, took his hat, and went hastening along on his expedition. Rather to

his surprise, his quick eyes, casting themselves into dark spots as well as light ones, caught sight of Bede Greatorex standing in the shade opposite his house, apparently watching its lighted windows, from which sounds of talking and laughing issued forth. Roland conjectured that some gaiety was as usual going on in the house, which its master would escape. Over he went to him, without ceremony.

"You don't like all that, sir?" he said, indicating the supposed company.

"Not too much of it," replied Bede Greatorex, startled out of his reverie by the unexpected address. "The fact is," he condescended to explain to his curious clerk, perhaps as an excuse for standing there, "certain matters have been giving me trouble of late. I was in deep thought."

"Mrs. Bede Greatorex does love society; she did as Louisa Joliffe," remarked Roland, meaning to be confidential.

"I was not thinking of Mrs. Bede Greatorex, but of the loss from my office," spoke his master in a cold, proud tone of reproof.

Crossing the road, as if declining further conversation, he went in. Roland saw he had offended him, and wished his tongue had been tied, laying down his thoughtless speech as usual to the having sojourned at Port Natal. It might not be a propitious moment for requesting the loan of the office keys, and Roland had the sense to foresee it.

Who should come out of the house at that moment but Annabel Channing, attended by a servant. The sight of her put work, keys, and all else, out of Roland's head. He leaped across, seized her hands, and learnt that she had got leave to spend the evening with Hamish and his wife.

"I'll take care of you; I'll see you safely there," cried Roland impetuously. "You can go back, old Dalla."

Old Dalla—a middle-aged yellow woman who had brought Jane Greatorex from India and remained with the child as her attendant—made no more ado, but took him at his word; glad to be spared the walk, she turned in-doors at once. And before Annabel well knew what had occurred, she found herself being whirled away by Roland in an opposite direction to the one she wished to go. It was only twilight yet. Roland had her securely on his arm, and began to pace the square. To say the truth, he looked on the meeting as a special chance, for he had not once set eyes on the young lady, save in the formal presence of others, since that avowal of his a fortnight ago in Mr. Greatorex's room.

"What are you doing?" she asked, when she could collect herself. "This is not the way to Hamish's."

"This is the way to get a few words with you, Annabel; one can't talk in the street with its glare and its people. We are private here; and I'll take you to Hamish's in a minute or two."

In his impulsive fashion, he began telling her his plans and his dreams. That he had determined to make an income and a home for her; as a beginning, until something better turned up, he was working all his spare time at copying deeds: "nearly night and day." One, less unsophisticated than Roland Yorke, might have suppressed a small item of the programme—that which related to Annabel's contributing to the fund herself, by obtaining pupils. Not he. He avowed it just as openly as his own intention of getting "something under Government." In short, Roland made the young lady a regular offer. Or, rather, did not so much *make* the offer, as assume that it had been already made, and was, so far, settled. His arguments were sensible; his plans looked really feasible; the day-dreams tolerably bright.

"But I have not said I would have you yet," spoke Annabel all in a flutter, when she could get in a word edge-ways. "You should not make so sure of things."

"Not make sure of it! Not have me!" cried Roland in indignant remonstrance. "Now look you here, Annabel—you *know* you'll have me: it is all nonsense to make believe you won't. I don't suppose I've asked you in the proper way, or put things in the proper light; but you ought to make allowance for a fellow who has had his manners knocked out of him at Port Natal. When the time arrives that I've got a little house and a few chairs and tables in its rooms, you'll come home to me; and I'll try and make you happy in it, and work for you till I drop. There! If I knew how to say it better, I would: and you need not despise a man for his incapable way of putting it. Not have me! I'd like to know who you would have, if not me!"

Annabel Channing offered no further remonstrance. That she had contrived to fall in love with Roland Yorke, and would rather marry him than anybody else in the world, she knew all too well. The home, and the chairs and the tables in it, and the joint working together to keep it going, wore a bright vista to her heart, looked at from a distance with youth's hopeful eyes. But she did not speak: and Roland, mistaking her silence, regarded it as a personal injury.

"When I and Arthur are the dearest friends in the world! He'd give you to me off-hand; I know it. It is not kind of you, Annabel. We engaged ourselves to each other when you were a little one and I was a tall donkey of fourteen, and if I've ever thought of a wife at all since I grew up, it was of you. I have done nothing but think of you since I came back. I wonder how *you'd* feel if I turned round and said, 'I don't know that I shall have you.' Not jovial, I know."

"You should not bring up the nonsense we said when we were children," returned Annabel, at a loss what else to answer. "I'm sure I could not have been above seven. We were playing at oranges and lemons: I remember the evening quite well: and you——"

"Now just you be open, Annabel, and say what it is your mind's



harbouring against me," interrupted Roland, in a tone of deep feeling. "Is it that twenty-pound note of old Galloway's?—or is it because I went knocking about at Port Natal?"

"Oh, Roland, how foolish you are! As if I could think of either!"

And there was something in the words and tone, in the pretty, shy, blushing face that reassured Roland. From that moment he looked upon matters as irrevocably settled, gave Annabel's hand a squeeze against his side, and went on to enlarge upon his dreams of the future.

"I've taken counsel with myself and with Mrs. J., and I don't think the pair of us are likely to be led astray by romance, Annabel, for she is one of the strong-minded ones. She agrees with me that we might do well on three hundred a year; and, what with my work and your pupils, we could make that easily. But, I said to her, let's be on the safe side, and put it down at only two hundred. Just to begin with, you know, Annabel. She said 'Yes, we might do on that if we were both economical'—and I'm sure if I've not learnt to be *that* I've learnt nothing. I would not risk the temptation of giving away—which I am afraid I'm prone to—for you should be cash-keeper, Annabel; just as Mrs. J. keeps my sovereign a week now. My goodness! the having no money in one's pocket *is* a safeguard. When I see things in the shop windows, whether it's eatables, or what not, I remember my lack of cash, and pass on. I stopped to look at a splendid diamond necklace yesterday in Regent Street, and thought how much I should like to get it for you; but with empty pockets, where was the use of going in to enquire the price?"

"I do not care for diamonds," said Annabel.

"You will have them some time, I hope, when my fortune's made. But about the two hundred a year? Mrs. J. said if we could be sure of making that regularly, she thought we might risk it; only, *she* said there might be interruptions. It would not be Mrs. J. if she didn't croak a little."

"Interruptions!" exclaimed Annabel, something as Roland had interrupted Mrs. Jones, and quite as unsuspicious as he. "Of what kind?"

"Sickness, Mrs. J. mentioned, and—but I don't think I'll tell you that," considered Roland. "Let's say, and general contingencies. I'm sure I should as soon have thought of setting up a menagerie of owls, but for her putting it into my head. A fellow who has helped to land boats at Port Natal can't be expected to foresee everything. Would you be afraid to encounter the two hundred a year?"

"I fear mamma would for me. And Hamish."

"Now Annabel, don't you get bringing up objections for other people. Time enough for that when they come down with them of their own accord. I intend to speak to Hamish to-night if I can get the opportunity. I don't want you to keep your promise a secret. You

are a dear good girl, and the little home shall be ours before a twelvemonth's gone by, if I have to work my hands off."

The little home! Poor Roland! If he could but have foreseen what twelvemonths would bring forth.

Hamish Channing's book had come out under more favourable auspices than Gerald's. The publisher, far from demanding money in advance for expenses, had made fair terms with him. Of course the result would depend on the sale. When Hamish held the first copies in his hand, his whole being was lighted up with silent enthusiasm; the joy it was to bring, the appreciation, had already set in. He sent a copy to his mother; and he sent one to Gerald Yorke, with a brief, kind note: in the simplicity of his heart he supposed Gerald would rejoice, just as he at first had rejoiced for him.

How good the book was, Hamish knew. The publisher knew. The world, Hamish thought, would soon know. He did not deceive himself in its appreciation, or exaggerate the real worth and merits of the work: in point of fact, the praise meted out to Gerald's would have been really applicable to his. Never did Hamish, even in his moments of extremest doubt and diffidence, cast a thought to the possibility that his book would be cried down. Already he was thinking of beginning a second; and his other work, the occasional papers, went on with a zest.

He sat with his little girl, Nelly, on his knee, on this self-same evening that Roland had pounced on Annabel. The child had her blue eyes and her bright face turned to him as she chattered. He looked down fondly at her and stroked the pretty curls of her golden hair.

"And when will the ship be home, papa?"

"Very soon now. It is nearing the port."

"But when will it be quite, quite, quite home?"

"In a few days I think, Nelly. I'm not sure, but I ought to say it has come."

"It was those books that came in the parcel last night?" said shrewd little Nelly.

"Even so, darling."

"Mamma has been reading them all day. I saw"—Nelly put her sweet face close up and dropped her voice—"I saw her crying at places of them."

A soft faint crimson stole into Hamish Channing's cheeks; his lips parted, his breath came quicker; a sudden radiance illuminated his whole countenance. This whisper of the child's brought to his heart its first glad sense of that best return—appreciation.

Company arrived to interrupt the quiet home happiness. Mrs. Gerald Yorke and her three meek children. Winny had a face of distress, and made a faint apology for bringing the little ones, but it was over early to leave them in bed. Close upon this, Roland and Annabel

entered, and had the pleasure of being in time to hear Gerald's wife tell out her grievances.

They were of the old description. No money, importunate creditors, Gerald unbearably cross. Annabel felt inclined to smile; Roland was full of sympathy. Had the prospective fortune (that he was sure to make) been already in his hands, he would have given a purse of gold to Winny, and carried off the three little girls to the theatre there and then. The next best thing was to promise them, which he did largely.

"And me too, Roland," cried eager Nelly, dancing in and out amid the impromptu visitors in the highest glee, her shining curls never still.

"Of course *you*," said Roland to the fair child, who had come to an anchor before him, flinging her arms upon his knees. "I'd not go anywhere without you, you know, Nelly. If I were not engaged to somebody else, I'd make you my little wife."

"Who is the somebody else? Kitty?"

"Not Kitty, she's too little."

"Let it be me, then."

Roland laughed and looked across at Hamish. "If I don't ask you for her, I may for somebody else; so prepare."

"I'm sure I hope, Roland, if ever you do marry, that you'll not be snappish with your wife and little girls as your brother is with us," interposed Winny with a sob. "I think it is something in Mr. Channing's book that has put him out to-day; as soon as it came this morning, he locked himself into the room alone with it, and never came out for hours; but when he did come—oh, was he not in a temper! He pushed Fredy and she fell on the carpet, and shook Rosy till she cried; and nobody knows for what. I'm sure they are like little mice for quietness when he's there; they are too much afraid of him to be otherwise."

It was well for Gerald Yorke that he committed no grave crimes; for his wife, in her childish simplicity, in her inability to bear in silence, would be safe to have betrayed them. She was right in her surmises—in fact, Winny, with all her silliness, had a great deal of discernment—that the cause of her husband's worse temper than usual was Hamish Channing's book. Seizing upon it when it came, Gerald locked himself up with it, forbidding any interruption in terms that might not be disobeyed. On the surface alone he could see that it was no sham book: Gerald's book had about twenty lines in a page, and the large, wide, straggling type might have been read a mile off. This was different: it was closely printed, rather than not, as if the writer were at no fault for matter. In giving a guinea and a half for this work, the public would not find itself deluded into finding nothing to read. Gerald sat down. He was about to peruse this long-expected book, and he devoutly hoped to find it bad and worthless.

But, if Gerald Yorke could not write, he could appreciate: and with

the first commencing pages he saw what the work really was—rare, good, of powerful interest; essentially the production of a good man, a scholar, and a gentleman.

As he read on and on, his brow grew dark with a scowl, his lips were angrily bitten: the book, properly noticed, would certainly set the world a-longing: and Gerald might experience some difficulty in writing it down. The knowledge did not tend to soften his generally ill-tempered state of mind, and he flung the last volume on the table with a harsh word. Even at that early stage, some of the damnatory terms he would use to extinguish the book passed through his active brain.

Emerging from his retreat towards evening in this genial mood, he made those about him suffer from it. Winny, the non-enduring, might well wish to escape with her helpless children! Gerald departed, to keep an engagement at a white-bait entertainment; and she came to Hamish Channing's.

How different were the two men! Hamish Channing's heart had ached to pain at the badness of Gerald's book, for Gerald's sake; had he been a magician, he would have transformed its pages, with a stroke of his wand, to the brightest and best ever given to the world. Gerald Yorke put on the anger of a fiend because Hamish's work was *not* bad; and laid out his plans to ruin it.

"Man, vain man, dressed in a little brief authority,  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven  
As make the angels weep."

If the world is not entirely made up of these two types of men, the bad and the good, the narrow-hearted and the wide, the kindly generous and the cruelly selfish, believe me there are a vast many of each in it.

"It's getting worse and worse," sobbed Winny, continuing her grievances over the tea-table. "I don't mean Gerald now, but the shortness of money and the worry. I know we shall have to go into the work-house!"

"Bless you, don't lose heart!" cried Roland with a beaming face. "I can never lose that again after the ups and downs in Africa. I'll tell you of one, Mrs. Gerald.—Another piece of muffin, Kitty? there it is.—I and another fellow had had no food to speak of for two days; awfully low we were. We went into a store and they gave us some bills to paste on the walls. Well, somehow I lost the fellow and the bills, for he had taken possession of them. I went rushing about everywhere, looking for him—and that's not so pleasant when your inside's as hollow as an empty herring barrel—but he never turned up again. Whether he decamped with the bills, or whether he was put out of the way by a knock on the head, I don't know to this hour. Anyhow I had to go back to the store the next day, and tell about it. If you'll believe

me they accused me of swallowing the bills, or otherwise making away with them, and called for a man to take me into custody. A day and a night I lay in their detention-cell with nothing to eat and the rats running over me—oh, wasn't it good! One can't be nice over there, our experiences don't let us be; but I always had a horror of rats. Well, I got over that, Mrs. Gerald."

"Did they try you for it?" questioned Mrs. Gerald, who had suspended her tea to listen, full of interest.

"Good gracious, no! They let me out. Oh, but I could tell you of worse fixes than that. *You* take heart, I say; and never trouble your thoughts about workhouses. Things are safe to turn round when they seem at the worst."

The tea over, Mrs. Yorke said she must take her departure: the children were weary, she scarcely knew how she should get them back. Hamish had a cab called: when it came, he went out and lifted the little ones into it. Winny looked at it dubiously.

"You'll not tell Gerald that I said he was in a temper about your book, Mr. Channing?" she said pleadingly, as she took her seat.

"I'll not tell Gerald tales of any sort," answered Hamish with his gay smile. "Take heart, as Roland tells you to do, and look forward to better days both for you and your husband. Perhaps there is a little glimmer of their dawn already showing itself, though you cannot yet see it."

"Do you mean through Gerald's book?" she asked, half crossly.

"Oh dear no. What I mean has nothing to do with Gerald's book. Who has got the paper of cakes?—Fredy. All right. Good night. The cab's paid, Mrs. Yorke."

Mrs. Yorke burst into tears, leaned forward, and clasped Hamish's hand. The intimation as to the cab had solved a difficulty running through her mind; it was a great relief.

"God bless you, Mr. Channing! You are always kind."

"Only trust in God," he whispered gravely. "Trust Him ever, and He will take care of you."

The cab drove off, and Hamish turned away to encounter Roland Yorke. That gentleman, making his opportunity, had followed Hamish out; and now poured into his ear the tale he had to tell about himself and Annabel. Hamish did not hear it with altogether the stately dignity that might be expected to attend the reception of an offer of marriage for one's sister. On the contrary, he burst out laughing in Roland's face.

"Come now! be honest," cried Roland, deeply offended. "Is it me you'd despise, Mr. Channing, or the small prospect I can offer her?"

"Neither," said Hamish laughing still. "As to yourself, old fellow, if Annabel and the mother approve, I should not object. I never gave a heartier hand-shake to any man than I would to you as my brother-

in-law. I like you better than I do the other one, William Yorke ; and there's the truth."

"Oh—him ! you easily might," answered Roland, jerking his nose into the air, with his usual depreciation of the Reverend William Yorke's merits. "Then why do you laugh at me?"

"I laughed at the idea of your making two hundred a year at copying deeds."

"I didn't say I should. You couldn't have been listening to me, Hamish—I wish, then, you'd not laugh so, as if you only made game of a fellow ! What I said was, that I was putting my shoulder to the wheel in earnest, and had begun with copying, not to waste time. I have been thinking I'd try young Dick Yorke."

"Try him for what?"

"Why, to get me a post of some sort. I think he'll do it if he can. I'm sure it's not much I shall ask for—only a couple of hundreds a year, or so. And if Annabel secures a nice pupil or two, there'd be three hundred a year to start with. You'd not mind her teaching a little, would you, Hamish, while I was waiting for the skies to rain gold?"

"Not I. That would be for her own consideration."

"And when we shall have got the three hundred a year in secure prospect, you'll talk to Mrs. Channing of Helstonleigh for me, won't you?"

Hamish thought he might safely say Yes. The idea of Roland's "putting his shoulder to the wheel" sufficiently to earn two hundred pounds income, seemed to be amidst the world's improbabilities. He could not get over his laughing : and it vexed Roland.

"You think I can't work. You'll see. I'll go off to young Dick Yorke this very hour, and sound him. Nothing like taking time by the forelock. He is likely to be married, I hear."

"Who is?"

"Young Dick. They call him Vincent now, but before I went to Port Natal 'Dick' was good enough for him. My father never spoke of them but as old Dick and young Dick. Not that we had anything to do with the lot : they held themselves aloof from us. I never saw either of them but once, and that was when they came down to Helstonleigh to my father's funeral. He died in residence, you know, Hamish."

Hamish nodded : he remembered all the circumstances perfectly. Dr. Yorke's death had been unexpected until quite the last. Ailing for some time, he had yet been sufficiently well to enter on what was called his close residence of twenty-one days as Prebendary of the cathedral, of which he was also sub-dean. The disease made so rapid progress that before the residence was out he had expired.

"Old Dick made some promises to George that day, saying he'd get



him on: because George was the eldest, I suppose; he took little notice of the rest of us," resumed Roland. "It was after we came in from the funeral in our crape scarfs and hat-bands. But he never did an earthly thing for him, Hamish—as poor George could tell you, if he were alive. My father always said his brother Dick was selfish."

"You may find young Dick the same," said Hamish.

"So I should if it were his pocket I wanted to touch. But it's not, you know. And now I'll be off to him. I had intended to spend this evening at my copying, but I left the paper in the office, and there was likely to be a hitch about my getting it. I'll make up for it to-morrow night. I shall be back in time to tell you of my success, and to help you take Annabel home."

Roland's way of taking time by the forelock was to dash through the streets at his utmost speed, no matter what impediments he might have to overthrow in his way, and into the fashionable club-house frequented by Vincent Yorke, who dined there quite as often as he did at his father's house in Portland Place. Roland was in luck, and met him coming out.

"I say, Vincent, do stay and hear me for a minute or two. It is something of consequence."

Vincent Yorke, not altogether approving of this familiar mode of salutation from Roland, although fate had made them cousins, did not yet quite see his way to refuse the request. As Roland had said, young Dick was sufficiently good-natured where his pocket was not attacked. He led the way to a corner in a room where they could be private, sat down, and offered a chair to Roland.

It was declined. Roland was a great deal too excited and too eager to sit. He poured forth his wants and hopes—that he wished to work honestly for just bread and cheese, and to get his own living, and be beholden to nobody: would he, Dick, help him to a place? He did not mind how hard he worked; till his shirt-sleeves were wet with honest sweat, if need be; and live on potatoes and half a pint of beer a day; so that he might just get on a little, and make a sum of two hundred pounds a year: or one hundred to begin with.

The word "Dick" slipped out inadvertently in Roland's heat. Not a man living so little capable, as he, of remembering conventionalities when thus excited. Vincent Yorke, detecting the earnest purpose, the sanguine hope, the real single-mindedness of the applicant, could but stare and laugh, and excuse mistakes under the circumstances. The very boldness of the request, preferred with straightforward candour, without the slightest reticence, told on him favourably, because it was so opposite to the crafty diplomacy that most men would have brought to bear on such an application. Favourably only, you understand, in so far as that he did not return a haughty repulse off-hand, but condescended to answer civilly.

"Such things are not in my line," he said, and—face to face with that realistic Port Natal traveller, he for once put aside his beloved fashionable attribute, the mincing lisp. "I don't go in for politics; never did go in for 'em; and Government places are not likely to come in my way. You should have applied to Sir Richard. He knows one or two of the Cabinet Ministers."

"I did apply to him once," replied Roland, "and he sent me off with a flea in my ear. I said then I'd never ask him for anything again, if it were to keep me from starving."

Vincent Yorke smiled. "Look here," said he; "you take him in his genial moods. Go up to him now; he'll just have dined. If anything can be got out of him, that's the time."

Mr. Vincent Yorke hit upon this quite as much to get rid of Roland, as in any belief in its efficacy. In the main what he said was true—that Sir Richard's after-dinner moods were his genial ones; but that Roland had not the ghost of a chance of being helped, he very well knew. That unsophisticated voyager, however, took it all in.

"I'll run up at once," he said. "I'm so much obliged to you, Vincent. I say, aren't you soon going to be married? I heard so."

"Eh—yes," replied Vincent, with frigid coldness, relapsing into himself and the fine gentleman.

"I wish you the best of good luck," returned Roland, heartily shaking the somewhat unwilling hand with a grip that he might have learnt at Port Natal. "And I hope she'll make you as good a wife as I know somebody else will make me. Good night, Vincent; I'm off."

Vincent nodded. It struck him that with all his drawbacks and deficiencies, Roland was rather a nice young fellow.

Outside the club door stood a hansom. Roland, in his eagerness and haste, was only kept from bolting into it by the slight deterrent accident of having no change in his pocket to pay the fare. He did not lose much. The speed at which he tore up Regent Street might have kept pace with the wheels of most cabs; and the resounding knock and ring he gave at Sir Richard's door in Portland Place, must surely have caused the establishment to think it announced the arrival of a fire-escape.

The door was flung open on the instant, as if to an expected visitor. But that Roland was not the one waited for, was proved by the stare of the servant. He arrested the further entrance.

"You are not the doctor!"

"Doctor!" said Roland, "I am no doctor. Let me pass if you please. I am Mr. Roland Yorke."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the man, recognizing the name as one borne by a nephew of the house. "You can go up, sir, of course, if you please, but my master is just taken ill. He has got a stroke."

"Bless me!" cried Roland, in concern. "Is it a bad one?"

"I'm afraid it is for death, sir," whispered the man. "We left him at his wine after dinner all comfortable; and when we went in a few minutes ago, there he was, drawn together so that you couldn't know him, and no breath in his body that we can hear. The nearest doctor's coming, and James is running to fifteen likely places to see if he can find Mr. Vincent."

"I'll go for him; I know where he is," cried Roland. And without further reflection he hailed another hansom that happened to be passing, jumped into it and ordered it to the club-house. Vincent was only then coming down the steps. He took Roland's place, and galloped home.

"I hope he'll be in time," thought Roland. "Poor old Dick!"

He was not in time. And the next morning London woke up to the news of Sir Richard Yorke's sudden death from an attack of apoplexy. And his son, the third baronet, had succeeded to the family estates and honours as Sir Vincent Yorke.

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### A LITTLE MORE LIGHT.

SOMETHING fresh, though not much, had turned up relating to the case of the late Mr. Ollivera. That it should do so after so many years had elapsed—or, rather, that it should not have done so before—was rather remarkable. But as it bears very little upon the history in its present stage, it may be dismissed in a chapter.

When John Ollivera departed on the circuit which was destined to bring him his death, a young man of the name of Willett accompanied the bar. He had been "called," but in point of fact only went as clerk to one of the leading counsel. There are barristers and barristers; just as there are young men and young men. Mr. Charles Willett had been of vast trouble to his family; and one of his elder brothers, Edmund, who was home from India on a temporary sojourn to recruit his health, had taken up the cause against him rather sharply, which induced a quarrel between them and lasting ill-feeling.

An intimacy had sprung up between Edmund Willett and John Ollivera, and they had become the closest of friends. They took a (supposed) final leave of each other when Mr. Ollivera departed on his circuit, for Mr. Willett was on the point of returning to India. His health had not improved, but he was obliged to go back; he was in a merchant's house in Calcutta; and the probabilities certainly were that he would not live to come home again. However, contrary to his own

and general expectations, as is sometimes the case, the result proved that everybody's opinion was mistaken. He not only lived, but he grew better, and he had now come to England on business matters. The minute details attendant on John Ollivera's death had never reached him, either through letters or newspapers, and he became acquainted with them for the first time in an interview with the Rev. Mr. Ollivera. When the unfinished letter was mentioned, and the fact that they had never been able to trace out the smallest information as to whom it was intended for, Mr. Willett at once said that it must have been intended for himself. He had charged John Ollivera (rather against the latter's will) to carry out, if possible, an arrangement with Charles Willett upon a certain disagreeable matter which had only come recently to the knowledge of his family, and to get that young man's written promise to arrest himself in, at least, one of his downward courses towards ruin. The letter to Mr. Ollivera, urging the request, was written and posted in London on the Saturday; Mr. Ollivera (receiving it on Sunday morning at Helstonleigh) would no doubt see Charles Willett in the course of Monday. That this was the "disagreeable commission" he had spoken of to Mr. Kene, as having been entrusted to him, and which he had left the Court at half-past three o'clock to enter upon, there could be no manner of doubt. Mr. Willett had expected an answer from him on Tuesday morning—it was the last day of his stay in London, for he would take his departure by the Dover mail in the evening—which answer never came. That Mr. Ollivera was writing the letter for the nine o'clock night despatch from Helstonleigh, and that the words in the commencing lines, "should I never see you again," referred solely to Mr. Willett's precarious health, and to the belief that he would not live to return again from India, also appeared to be indisputable. If this were so, why then, the first part of the letter, at any rate, was the sane work of a perfectly sane man, and no more pointed at self-destruction than it did at self-shampooing. The clergyman and Mr. Willett, arriving at this most natural conclusion, sat and looked at each other for a few moments, in painful silence. That unexplained, and apparently unexplainable, letter had been the one sole stumbling-block in Henry William Ollivera's otherwise perfect belief.

But, to leave no loop-hole of uncertainty, Charles Willett was sought out. When found (with slippers down at heel, a short pipe in his mouth, and a pewter pint-pot at his elbow) he avowed, without the smallest reticence, that John Ollivera's appointment for half-past three on that long-past Monday afternoon, in Helstonleigh, *had* been with him, and that, in answer to Mr. Ollivera's interference in his affairs, he had desired him to mind his own business, and to send word to his brother to do the same.

This left no doubt whatever on the clergyman's mind that the commenced letter had been as sensible and ordinary a letter as any man

could sit down to pen, and that the blotted words were appended to it by a different hand—that of the murderer.

In the full flush of his newly-acquired information, he went straight to the house of Mr. Greatorex, to pour the story into his uncle's ear. It happened to be the very day alluded to in the last chapter—in the evening of which you had the pleasure of seeing Mr. Roland Yorke industriously putting his shoulder to the wheel, after the ordinary hours of office work were over.

Mr. Greatorex had been slightly discomposed that day in regard to business matters. It seemed to him that something or other was perpetually arising to cause annoyance to the firm. Their business was on the increase, requiring the unwearied, active energies of its three heads more fully than it had ever done; whereas one of those heads was less efficient in management than he used to be—the second of them, Bede Greatorex. Mr. Greatorex, a remarkably capable man, always had more hard, sterling, untiring work in him than Bede, and he had it still. With his mother's warm Spanish blood, Bede had inherited the smallest modicum of temperamental indolence. As he had inherited (so ran the suspicion), the disease which had proved fatal to her.

"I cannot reproach him as I would," thought Mr. Greatorex, throwing himself into a chair in his room, when he quitted the office for the day, urged to despair almost at this recent negligence, or whatever it was, that had been brought home to them, and which had been traced to some forgetfulness of Bede's. "With that wan, weary look in his face, just as his mother's wore when her sickness was first coming on, it goes against me to blow him up harshly, as I should Frank. He *must* be very ill; he could not, else, look as he does; perhaps already nearly past hope: it was only when *she* was past hope that she suddenly failed in her round of duties and broke down. And he has one misery that his mother had not—trouble of mind, with that wife of his."

It was at this juncture that Mr. Greatorex was broken in upon by Henry William Ollivera. The clergyman standing so that the bright slanting rays of the hot evening sun, falling across his face, lighted up its pallor and its suppressed eagerness, imparted the tale that he had come to tell: the discovery that he and Edmund Willett had that day made.

It a little excited Mr. Greatorex. Truth to say, he had always looked upon that unfinished letter as a nearly certain proof that his nephew's death *had* been in accordance with the verdict of the jury. To him, as well as to the dead man's brother, the apparent impossibility of discovering any cause for its having been penned, or person for whom it could have been intended, had remained the great gulf of difficulty which could not be bridged over.

In this, the first moment of the disclosure, it seemed to him a great



discovery. We all know how exaggerated a view we sometimes take of matters, when they are unexpectedly presented to us. Mr. Greatorex went forth, calling aloud for his son Bede: who came down, in return to the call, in dinner attire. As Bede entered, his eye fell on his cousin Henry—or William, as Mr. Greatorex generally liked to call him—whose usually placid countenance was changed by the scarlet hectic on its thin cheeks. Bede saw that something, great or little, was about to be disclosed, and wished himself away again: for some time past he had felt no patience with the fancies and crotchets of Henry Ollivera.

It was Mr. Greatorex who disclosed what there was to tell. Bede received it ungraciously; that is, in a spirit of disbelieving mockery. Henry Ollivera was accustomed to these moods of his. The clergyman did not resent it openly; he simply stood with his deep eyes fixed watchingly on Bede's face, as if the steady gaze, the studied silence, carried their own reproof.

"I believe, if some wight came down on a voyage from the moon, and fed you with the most improbable fable ever invented by the erratic imagination of man, you would place credence in it," said Bede, turning sharply on Mr. Ollivera.

"Edmund Willett has not come from the moon," quietly spoke the clergyman.

"But Charles Willett—lost man!—is no better than a lunatic in his drinking bouts," retorted Bede.

"At any rate, he was neither a lunatic nor drunk to-day."

"His story does not hold water," pursued Bede. "Is it likely—is it possible, I should almost say,—that had he been the man with whom the appointment was held that afternoon, he would have kept the fact in until now?—and when so much stir and enquiry were made at the time?"

"Edmund Willett says it is just exactly the line of conduct his brother might have been expected to pursue," said Mr. Ollivera. "He was always of an ill-conditioned temper—morose, uncommunicative. That what Charles Willett says is perfectly true, I am as sure of as I am that I stand here. You had better see him yourself, Bede."

"To what end?"

"That you may be also convinced."

"And if I were convinced?" questioned Bede, after a pause. "What then?"

"I think the enquiry should be reopened," said Mr. Ollivera, addressing chiefly his uncle. "When I have spoken of pursuing it before, I was always met, both by Butterby and others, with the confuting argument that this letter was in my way. To say the truth, I found it a little so myself always. Always until this day."

"Don't bring up Butterby as an authority, William," interposed Mr. Greatorex. "If Butterby cannot conduct other cases better than he



has conducted the one concerning our lost cheque, I'd not give a feather for him and his opinions."

For the purloiner of that cheque remained an undiscovered puzzle; and the house of Greatorex and Greatorex (always excepting one of them) felt very sore upon the point, and showed it.

"William is right, Bede. This discovery removes a mountain of uncertainty and doubt. And if, by ventilating the unhappy affair again, we can unfold the mystery that attaches to it, and so clear John's name and memory, it ought to be done."

"But what can be tried, sir, or done, more than has been?" asked Bede, in a tone of reasoning.

"I don't know. Something may be. Of one thing I have felt a conviction all along—that if John's life was rudely taken by man's wicked hand, heaven will in time bring it to light. The old saying, that 'Murder will out,' is a very sure one."

"I do not think it has proved so in every instance," returned Bede, dreamily carrying his recollection backwards. "Some cases have remained undiscovered always."

"Yes, to the world," acquiesced Mr. Greatorex. "But there lies a firm belief in my mind that no man—or woman either—ever committed a wilful murder, but some one or other suspected him in their secret heart, and saw him in all his naked, miserable sin."

"Don't bring woman's name in, father. I never like to hear it done."

Bede spoke in the somewhat fractious tone he had grown often to use: that it was but the natural outlet of some inward pain none could doubt. Mr. Greatorex put it down chiefly to bodily suffering.

"Women have done worse deeds than men," was the elder man's answer. And Mr. Ollivera took a step forward, as if he meant to go.

"Whether man or woman did this—that is, took my dear brother's life—and then suffered the slur to rest on his own innocent self—suffered him to be buried like a dog—suffered his best relatives to think of him as one who had forfeited Heaven's redeeming mercy, I know not," said the clergyman. "But from this time forward, I vow never to slacken heart, or hand, or energy, until I shall have brought the truth to light. The way was long and dark, and seemed hopeless; it might be that I lost patience and grew slack and weary: perhaps this discovery has arisen to reprove me and spur me on."

"But what can you do in it?" again asked Bede.

"Whatever I do in it, I shall not come to you to aid me, Bede," was the reply. "It appears to me—and I have told you this before—that you would rather keep the dark cloud on my brother's name than help to lift it. What had he ever done to you in life that you should so requite him?"

"Heaven knows my heart and wish would be good to clear him," spoke Bede, with an earnestness that approached agitation. "But if I

am unable to do it,—if I cannot see how it may be done,—if the power of elucidation does not lie with me—what would you?”

“You have invariably thrown cold water upon every effort of mine. My most earnest purposes you have all but ridiculed.”

“No, Henry. I have been sorry, vexed if you will, at what I thought the mistaken view you took up. Over-reiteration of a subject leads to weariness. If I was unable to see any other probable solution than the one arrived at by the coroner and jury, it was not my fault. As to John—if by sacrificing my own life, at any moment since I saw him lying dead, could have restored his, I would willingly have offered it up.”

“I beg your pardon, Bede ; I spoke hastily,” said the man of peace. “Of course I have no right to be vexed that you and others cannot see with my eyes. But, rely upon it, the avowal now made by Charles Willett is true.”

“Yes, perhaps it may be,” acknowledged Bede.

“William,” interrupted Mr. Greatorex, lifting his head after a pause of thought—and his voice had sunk to a whisper. “It could not be that—that—Charles Willett was the one to slink in, and harm him?”

A kind of eager light flashed into the dark eyes of Bede Greatorex as he turned them on his cousin. If it did not express a belief in the possibility of the suggestion, it at least betrayed that the idea stirred up his interest.

“No,” said Mr. Ollivera. “No, no. Charles Willett has not behaved in a straightforward manner over it, but he is cool and open now. He says he has made it a rule for many years never to interfere voluntarily in the remotest degree with other people’s business ; and therefore he did not mention this until questioned to-day. Had he never been questioned, he says, he would never have spoken. I cannot understand such a man ; it seems to me a positive sin not to have disclosed these facts at the time ; but I am sure he tells the whole of the truth now. And now I must wish you good evening, for I have an engagement.”

Bede went along the passage with his cousin, and thence was turning to ascend the staircase. His father called him.

“What is it?” Bede asked, advancing.

“What is it?—why I want to talk to you about this.”

“Another time, father. The dinner’s waiting.”

“You would go to dinner if the house were falling,” spoke Mr. Greatorex, in his hasty vexation.

“Will you not come, sir?”

“No. I don’t want dinner. I shall get tea here and a chop with it. Things that are happening worry me, Bede, if they don’t you.”

Bede went away with a heavy sigh. Perhaps he was more worried,

and had greater cause for it too, than his father; but he did not choose to let more of it than he could help be seen.

Guests were at his table this evening, only some three or four; they were bidden by Mrs. Bede, preparatory to going to the opera together. It is more than probable that the suspicion of this assembly of guests kept Mr. Greatorex away.

The dinner was elaborate and expensive as usual. Bede ate nothing. He sat opposite to his wife and talked with the company, and took viand after viand on his plate when handed to him; but only to toy with the morsel for a few moments, and send it away all but untasted. Why did his wife gather around her this continual whirl of gaiety?—he nearly asked it aloud with a groan. Did she want to get rid of care? as, heaven knew, he did. A looker-on, able to dive into Bede's heart, might rather have asked, "Nay, why did he suffer her to gather it?"

The heat of the room oppressed him; the courses were long, but he sat on—on, until quiescence became intolerable. When lights came in, he rose abruptly, went to the furthest window, and threw it wide open. Twilight encompassed the earth with her soft folds; the day's bold garishness was over for at least some welcome hours. A woman was singing in the street below, her barefooted children standing round her with that shrinking air peculiar to such a group, and she turned up a miserable, sickly, famine-stricken face to Bede, in piteous, mute appeal. It was not ineffectual. Whatever his own cares and illness might be, he at least could feel for others. Just as he flung the woman a shilling, his wife came to him with a whisper, whose tone had an unpleasant ring of taunt in it.

"Have you, as usual, the headache to-night?"

"Headache and heartache, both, Louisa."

"I should suppose so, by your quitting the table. You might have apologized."

"And you might give the house a little rest. How far I am from wishing to complain or interfere unnecessarily, you must know, Louisa; but I declare that this incessant strain of entertaining people will drive me crazy. It is telling upon my nerves. It is telling in a different way upon my father."

"I shall entertain people every day, when I am not engaged out myself," said Mrs. Bede Greatorex. "Take a house for me away, in Hyde Park, or Belgravia; or I'd not mind Portland Place: and then we should not annoy Mr. Greatorex. As long as you are obstinate about the one, I shall be about the other."

Bede seized her hand; partly in anger, partly—as it seemed—in tenderness; and drew her nearer, that she might hear his impressive whisper.

"I am not sure but your wish, that we should quit the house will be

gratified—though not as you expect. My father's patience is being tried. He is the real owner of the house; and any moment he may say to us, Go out of it. Louisa, I have thought of mentioning this to you for some little time; but the subject is not a pleasant one."

"I wish he would say it."

"But don't you see the result? You are thinking of a west-end mansion. My means would not allow me to take a dwelling half so good as this one. That's the simple truth, Louisa."

She flung his hand from her with a defiant laugh of power, as she prepared to rejoin her guests. "*You* might not, but *I* would."

And Bede knew that to run him helplessly into debt would have been fun, rather than otherwise, to his wife.

Coffee came in at once, and Bede took the opportunity to escape. There was no formal after-dinner sitting this evening, or withdrawal of the ladies. As he passed along the corridor, Miss Channing was standing at the door of the study. He enquired in a kind tone if she wanted anything.

"I am waiting for Mrs. Greatorex—to ask her if I may go for an hour to my brother's," answered Annabel. "Old Dalla will take me."

"Go by all means if you wish," he said. "Why did you think it necessary to ask? Do make yourself at home with us, Miss Channing, and be as happy as you can."

Annabel thanked him, and he went downstairs, little supposing how very very far from happy it was possible for her to be, exposed to all the caprices of his wife. Halting at the door for a moment he wandered across the street, and stood there in the shade, mechanically listening to the ballad woman's singing, wafted faintly from the distance, just as he mechanically looked up at his own lighted windows, and heard the gay laughter that now and again came forth from them.

"I never ought to have married her," said the voice of conscience, breathing its secrets from the cautious depths of his inmost heart. "Every law, human and divine, should have warned me against it. I was infatuated to blindness: nay, not to blindness; I cannot plead that: but to folly. It was very wrong: it was horribly sinful: and heaven is justly punishing me. The fault was mine: I might have kept aloof from her after that miserably eventful night. I ought to have done so; to have held her at more than arm's distance evermore. Ought!—lives there another man on the face of the earth, I wonder, who would not? The fault of our union was mine wholly, not hers; and so, whatsoever trials she brings on me I will bear, patiently as I best may. I sought *her*. She would never have dared to seek me, after that night and the discovery I made the day subsequently in poor John's room: and the complication of ill arising, or to arise, from our marriage, *I* have to answer for. I am nearly tired of the inward warfare: three years of it! Three years, and more, since I committed the mad act of

tying myself to her for life: for better or for worse: and it has been nothing for me but one prolonged, never-shifting scene of self-repentance. We are wearing a mask to each other: God grant that I may go to my grave without being forced to lift it! For her sake; for her sake!"

He paused to lift his hat from his brow and wipe the sweat that had gathered there. And then he took a step forward and a step backward in the dim shade. But he could not drive away, even for a moment, the care ever eating away his heart, or turn his vision from the threatening shadow that always seemed looming in the distance.

"Of all the wild infatuation that ever took possession of the heart of man for woman, surely mine for Louisa Joliffe was the worst! Did Satan lead me on? It must have been so. 'Be sure your sin shall find you out!' Since that fatal moment when I stood at the altar with her, those ominous words have never I think been quite absent from my memory. Every hour of my life, every minute of the day and night as they pass, does my sin find me. Knowing what I did know, could I not have been content to let her go her own way, while I went mine? Heaven help me! for I love her yet, as man rarely has loved. And when my father, or others, cast a reflection on her, it is worse to me than a dagger's thrust. So long as I may, I will shield her from——"

It was at this moment that the soliloquy, so pregnant with weighty if vague revelation, was broken in upon by Mr. Roland Yorke. Little guessed careless Roland what painful regrets he had put a temporary stop to. Bede, as was previously seen, went indoors, and Roland departed with Miss Channing on her evening visit, dismissing Dalla without the smallest ceremony.

The carriage, to convey Mrs. Bede Greatorex and her friends abroad, drove up. Bede, somewhat neglectful of the rest, came out with his wife and placed her in it.

"Are you not coming with us?" she bent forward to whisper, seeing he was about to close the door.

"Not to-night. I have some work to do."

"Sulky as usual, Bede?"

His lips parted to retort, but he closed them, and endured meekly. Sulky to her he had never been, and she knew it. The carriage moved away with her; and Bede lifted his hat; a smile, meant to deceive the world, making his face one of careless gaiety.

Whether he had work to do, or not, he did not get to it. Sauntering away from the door, away and away, hardly knowing and not heeding whither, he found himself presently in the Strand, and thence at the river-side. There he paced backwards and forwards with unequal steps, his mind lost in many things, but more especially in the communication made that day by Henry Ollivera.

The fragmentary letter connected with that long-past history, and the



appointment, spoken of by Mr. Kene, that John Ollivera went out of court to keep, had been as much of a puzzle to Bede Greatorex as it was to other people. Upon reflection, he came now to think that the present solution of the affair was the true one. Would it lead to further discovery? Very fervently he hoped that it would not. There were grave reasons, as none knew better than Bede, for keeping all further discovery back; for, if it came, it would hurl down confusion, dismay, and misery, upon innocent heads as well as guilty ones.

The river, flowing on in its course, was silent and dull in the summer's night. A line of light illumined the sky in the west where the sultry sun had gone down in heat; and as Bede looked towards it and thought of the All-seeing Eye that lay beyond that light, he felt how fruitless it was for him to plot and plan, and to say this shall be or this shall not be. The course of the future rested in the hands of one Divine Ruler, and his own poor, short-sighted, impotent will was worse than nothing.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

### LAID WITH HIS FOREFATHERS.

So great a man as Sir Richard Yorke must of course be honoured with a great funeral. He had died on a Thursday; the interment was fixed for the next Friday week: which, taking the heat of the weather and sundry other trifles into consideration, was a little longer than it need have been. Sir Vincent, his new dignity as head of the Yorke family lying upon him with a due and weighty self-importance, was determined (like Jonas Chuzzlewit of wide memory) that the public should see he did not grudge to his late father any honour in the shape of plumes and mutes and coaches and show, that it was in his power to accord to him. There were three costly coffins, one of them of lead, and at the very least three and sixty sets of towering feathers. So that Portland Place was as a gala that day, and windows and pavements were alike filled with sight-gazers.

The Rev. William Yorke, Minor Canon of Helstonleigh Cathedral, Chaplain of Hazledon, and Rector of Coombe Lee, was bidden to it. He was not very nearly related to the deceased, (his father and Sir Richard had been second cousins) but he was undoubtedly a rising man in the Church, and Sir Vincent thought fit to remember the connection. The clergyman stood in the relationship of brother-in-law to Hamish Channing; and it was at Hamish's house he stayed during the brief stay—two days—of his sojourn in town.

Another, honoured with an invitation, was Gerald Yorke. Roland was not of a particularly exacting disposition, but he did think he, the eldest, ought not to have been passed over for his younger brother.



Oughts don't go for much, however, in some things, as Roland knew. Gerald belonged to the great world: he had fashionable chambers, fashionable friends, fashionable attire, and a fashionable drawl; his private embarrassments were nothing to Sir Vincent; in fact they might be said to be fashionable too: and so Gerald, the consequential, was bidden to a seat in a mourning-coach, with feathers nodding on the four horses' heads.

Roland was ignored. Not more entirely so than if Sir Vincent had never heard there was such a man in the world. A lawyer's clerk, enjoying a pound a week and a turn-up bedstead, who took copying home to do at twopence a page, and avowed he had just been nearly on the point of turning hot-pie vendor, was clearly not an individual fit to be suffered in contact with a deceased baronet, even though it were only to follow him to the tomb of his forefathers. But, though Roland was not there, his master was, Mr. Greatorex. And Mr. Greatorex, as solicitor and confidential man of business to the late Sir Richard, occupied no unimportant post in the procession.

It was late in the afternoon; and the mortal remains, bereft of all their attendant pomp and plumes and scutcheons, had been left in their resting-place, when a mourning-coach drew up to Mr. Channing's, out of which stepped William and Gerald Yorke. Roland, happening to be there, watched the descent from the drawing-room window side by side with Nelly Channing, and it may be questioned which of the two looked on with the more unsophisticated interest. Mr. Greatorex had not been quite so unmindful of Roland's claims to be considered as Sir Vincent was, and had told him he might take holiday on the day of his uncle's funeral, by remaining away from the office.

Roland obeyed one portion of it literally—the taking *holiday*. It never occurred to Roland that he might turn the day to profit by putting his shoulder to the wheel, and his fingers to copying; holiday was holiday, and he took it as such. Rigged out in a handsome new suit of black (made in haste by Lord Carrick's tailor), black gloves, and a band of cloth on his hat, Roland spent the fore-part of the day in sight-seeing. As many show-places as could be gone into for nothing, or next to nothing, he went to; beginning with Madame Tassaud's wax-work, for which somebody gave him admission, and ending with a live giantess down in Whitechapel. Late in the afternoon, and a little tired, he arrived at Hamish Channing's, and was rewarded by seeing Annabel. Mrs. Bede Greatorex (gracious that day) had given Miss Channing permission to spend the evening there to meet her sister's husband, the Rev. William Yorke. Hamish, just in from his office, sat with them. Nelly Channing, her nose flattened against the window-pane, shared with Roland the delight of the descent from the coach. Its four black horses and their lofty plumes, struck on the child's mind with a sensation of awe that nearly overpowered the admiration. She wore a white

frock with black sash, and had her sleeves tied up with black ribbons. Mrs. Channing possessed a large sense of the fitness of things, and deemed it well to put the child in these ribbons to-day, when two of the mourners would be returning there from the funeral.

They came upstairs, William and Gerald Yorke, and entered the drawing-room, the silk scarves on their shoulders, and the flowing hatbands of crape sweeping the ground. Nelly backed into a corner, and stood there staring at the attire. It was the first time the clergyman and Roland had met for many years. As may have been gathered during back pages, Roland did not hold his cousin in any particular admiration, but he knew good manners (as he would himself have phrased it) better than to show aught but civility now. In fact, Roland's resentment was very much like that of a great many more of us—more talk than fight. They shook hands, Roland helped him to take off the scarf, and for a few moments they were absorbed in past interests. Whatever Roland's old prejudices might have been, he could not deny that the Rev. William Yorke was good-looking as of yore; a tall, slender, handsome man of four-and-thirty now, bearing about him the stamp of a successful one; his fresh countenance was genial and kind, although a touch of the noted Yorke pride sat on it.

That pride, or perhaps a consciousness of his own superiority, for William Yorke was a good man, and thought well of himself for it, prevented his being so frankly cordial with Roland as he might have been. Roland's many faults in the old days (as the clergyman had deemed them), and the one great fault which had brought humiliation to him in two ways, were very present to his mind to-night. Slighting remarks made by Gerald on his brother during the day, caused Mr. Yorke to regard Roland as no better than a *mauvais sujet*, down in the world, and not likely to get up in it. Gerald, on the contrary, he looked upon as a successful and rising man. Mr. Yorke saw only the surface of things, and could but judge accordingly.

"How is Constance?" enquired Roland. "I sent her word not to marry you, you know."

"Constance is well and happy, and charged me to bring you a double share of love and good remembrances," answered the clergyman, slightly laughing.

"Dear old Constance! I say," and Roland dropped his voice to a mysterious whisper, "is not Annabel like her? One might think it the same face."

Mr. Yorke turned and glanced at Annabel—she was talking apart with Gerald. "Yes, there is a good deal of resemblance," he carelessly said, rather preoccupied with marvelling how the young man by his side came to be so well dressed.

Roland, his resentments shallow as the wind, and as fleet in passing, would have shaken hands with Gerald as a matter of course. Gerald

managed to evade the honour without any apparent rudeness; he had the room to greet, and his silk scarf to unwind, and it really seemed to Roland that it was quite natural he should be overlooked.

"A magnificent funeral," spoke Gerald, glancing askance at Roland's fine suit of mourning, every whit as handsome as his own. "Seven mourning coaches-and-four, and no end of private carriages."

"But I can't say much for their manners, they did not invite me," put in Roland. "I'm older than you, Gerald."

"Aw—ah—by a year or two," croaked Gerald in his worst tone, as to affectation and drawl. "One has, I take it, to—aw—consider the position of a—aw—party on these—aw—occasions, not how old they may be."

"Oh, of course," said Roland, some slight mockery in his good-natured voice. "You are a man of fashion, going in for white-bait and iced champagne, and I'm only an unsuccessful fellow returned from Port Natal, like a bad shilling, and got to work hard for my bread and cheese and beer."

As the hour of William Yorke's return from the funeral was uncertain, but expected to be a late one, it had been decided that the meal prepared should be a tea-dinner—tea and cold meats with it. Gerald was asked to remain for it. A few minutes, and they were seated in the dining-room at a well-spread board, Mrs. Channing presiding; Hamish, with his bright face, his genial hospitality, and his courtly manners, facing her. Roland and Annabel were on one side, the clergyman and Gerald on the other. Miss Nelly, on a high chair, wedged herself in between her mamma and Roland.

"Treason!" cried Hamish. "Who said little girls were to be at table?"

"Mamma did," answered quick Nelly. "Mamma said I should have a great piece of fowl and some tongue."

"Provided you were silent, and not troublesome," put in Mrs. Channing.

"I'll keep her quiet," said Roland. "Nelly shall whisper only to me."

Miss Nelly's answer was to lay her pretty face close to Roland's. He left some kisses on it.

Gerald sat next to Hamish and opposite to Annabel. Remembering the state of that gentleman's feelings towards Mr. Channing, it may be wondered that he condescended to accept his hospitality. Two reasons induced him to it. Any quarters were more acceptable than his own just now, and he had no invitation for the evening, even had it been decent to show himself in the great world an hour after leaving his uncle in the grave. The other reason was, that he was just now working some ill to Hamish, and wished to appear extra friendly to avert suspicion.

"I hope you have not dined, Roland," remarked Hamish, supplying him with a large plate of pigeon-pie.

"Well, I have, and I've not," replied Roland, beginning upon the tempting viands. "I bought three sausage-rolls at one o'clock, down east way: it would have been my dinner but for this."

Gerald flicked his delicate cambric handkerchief out of his pocket and held it for a moment to his nose, as if he were warding off some bad odour that brought disgust to him. Sausage-rolls! Whether they, or the unblushing candour of the avowal were the worst, he hardly knew.

"Sausage-rolls must be great delicacies!" he observed with a covert sneer. And Roland looked across.

"They are not as good as pigeon-pie. But they cost only twopence apiece: and I had but sixpence with me. I have to regulate my appetite according to my means," he added with a pleasant laugh and his mouth full of crust and gravy.

"Roland—as you have, in a manner, touched upon the subject—I should like to ask what you think of doing," interposed William Yorke, in a condescending but kindly tone. "You seem to have no prospects whatever."

"Oh I shall get along," cheerfully answered Roland with a side glance at Miss Channing. "Perhaps you'll see me in housekeeping in a year's time from this."

"In housekeeping!"

"Yes: with a house of my own,—and, something else. I'm not afraid. I have begun to put my shoulder to the wheel in earnest. If I don't get on, it shall not be from lack of working for it."

"How have you begun to put your shoulder to the wheel?"

"Well—I take home copying to do in my spare time after office hours. I have been doing it over three weeks now."

"And how much do you earn at it weekly?" continued William Yorke.

A slight depression from its bright exultation passed over Roland's ingenuous face. Hamish saw it, and laughed. Hamish was quite a confidant, for Roland carried to him all his hopes and their tiresome drawbacks.

"I can tell you: I added it up," said Roland. "Taking the three weeks on the average, it has been two-and-twopence a week."

"Two-and-twopence a week!" echoed William Yorke, who had expected him (after the laudatory introduction), to say at the least two pounds two. Roland detected the surprise and disappointment.

"Oh, well, you know, William Yorke, a fellow cannot expect to make pounds just at first. What with mistakes, when the writing has to be begun all over again, and the paying for spoilt paper, which Brown insists upon, two-and-twopence is not so much amiss. One has to make a beginning at everything."

"Are you a good hand at accounts?" enquired Mr. Yorke, possibly in the vague notion that Roland's talents might be turned to something more profitable than the copying of folios.

"I ought to be," said Roland. "If the counting up, over and over and over again, of those frying-pans I carried to Port Natal, could make a man an accountant, it must have made one of me. I used to be at it morning and evening. You see, I thought they were going to sell for about eight-and-twenty shillings apiece, out there: no wonder I often reckoned them up."

"And they did not?"

"Law, bless you! In the first place nobody wanted frying-pans, and I had to get a Natal store-keeper to house them in his place for me—I couldn't leave them on the quay. But the time came that I was obliged to sell them: they were eating their handles off."

"With rust, I suppose."

"Good gracious, no! with *rent*, not rust. The fellow (they are regular thieves, over there) charged me an awful rent: so I told him to put them into an auction. Instead of the eight-and-twenty shillings each that I had expected to get, he paid me about eight-and-twenty pence for the lot, case and all. But if you ask whether I am a ready reckoner, William Yorke, I'm sure I must be that."

The Rev. William Yorke privately thought there might be a doubt upon the point. He fancied Roland's present prospects could not be first-rate.

"The copying is nothing but a temporary preliminary," observed Roland. "I am waiting to get a place under Government. Vincent Yorke, I expect, can put me up for one, now he has come into power; and I don't think he'll want the will, though he did pass me over to-day."

If ever face expressed condemnatory contempt Gerald's did as he turned it full on his brother. For, this very hope was being cherished by himself. It was he who intended to profit by the interest of Sir Vincent, to be exerted on his behalf. And to have a rival in the same field, although one of so little account as Roland, was not agreeable.

"The best thing *you* can do, is to go off again to Port Natal," he said roughly. "You'll never get along here."

"But I intend to get along, Gerald. Once let me have a fair start—and I have never had it yet—there's not many shall distance me."

"What do you call a fair start?" asked Mrs. Channing, who always enjoyed Roland's sanguine dreams.

"A place where I can bring my abilities into use, and be remunerated accordingly. I don't ask better than to work, and be paid for it. Only let me earn a couple of hundred a year to begin with, Mrs. Channing, and you'd never hear me ask Vincent Yorke or anybody else for help again."



"You had not used to like the prospect of work, Roland," spoke William Yorke.

"But then I had not had my pride and laziness knocked out of me at Port Natal."

William Yorke lifted his eyes. "Did that happen to you?"

"It *did*," emphatically answered Roland. "Oh, I shall get into something good by-and-by, where my talents can find play. Of all things, I should best like a farm."

"A farm!"

"A nice little farm. And if I had a few hundred pounds, I'd take one to-morrow. Do you know anything of butter-making, Annabel?" he stopped to ask, dropping his voice.

Annabel bent her blushing face over her plate, and pretended not to hear. Roland thought she was offended.

"I didn't mean *make* it, you know," he whispered; "I'd not like to see you do such a thing"—bringing his face back again to the general company. "But it's of little good thinking of a farm, you see, William Yorke, when there's no money to the fore."

"You don't know anything of farming," said Mr. Yorke, inwardly wondering whether this appeal to Annabel had meant anything, or was only one of Roland's thoughtless interludes of speech.

"Don't I?" said Roland; "I was on one for ever so long at Port Natal, and had to drive pigs. It is astonishing the sight of experience a fellow picks up over there, and the little he learns to live upon."

"Because he has to do it, I suppose."

"That's the secret. I am earning a pound a-week now, regular pay, and make it do for all my wants. You'd not think it, would you, William Yorke?"

"Certainly not, to look at you," said William Yorke, with a smile. "Are clothes included?"

"Oh, Carrick goes bail for all that. I'm afraid he'll find the bills running up; but a fellow, if he's a gentleman, must look decent. I'm as careful as I can be, and sit in my shirt-sleeves at home when it's hot."

"Lady Augusta has visions of your walking about London streets in a coat out at elbows. I think it troubles her."

Roland paused, stared, and then started up in impulsive contrition, nearly pulling off the table-cloth.

"What a thoughtless booby I was, never to let her know! The minute you get down home, you go to the mother, William Yorke. Tell her how it is—that I have the run of Carrick's people for clothes, boots, hats, and all the rest of it. This suit came home at eight this morning, with an apology for not sending it last night—the fellow thought I might be going to the funeral—and a sensible thought, too! Look at it! stretching out his arms, and turning himself about, that Mr. Yorke might get a comprehensive view of the superfine frock-coat and its silken linings,



"I am never worse dressed than than this; only that my things are not on new every day. You tell her this, William Yorke."

He had not done it in vanity; of that Roland possessed as little as any one; but in eager, earnest desire to reassure his mother, and atone to her for his ungrateful forgetfulness. Stooping for his table-napkin, he sat down again.

"Yes, I am well-dressed, though I do have to work. And for recreation, there's this house to come to; and dear old Hamish and Mrs. Channing receive me with gladness, and make much of me, just as though I had always been good; and Nelly jumps into my arms."

"When do you mean to come to Helstonleigh?"

"Never," answered Roland, with prompt decision. "As I can't go back as I wanted to—rich—I shall not go at all. What I wish to ask is, when Arthur Channing is coming up here?"

"Arthur Channing! I cannot tell."

"It is a shame of people to get a fellow's hopes up, and then damp them. Arthur wrote me word—oh, a month ago—that he was coming to London for old Galloway. Close nearly upon that, comes a second letter, saying Galloway was not sure that he should require to send him. I *should* like to serve him out."

William Yorke smiled. "Serve out Arthur?"

"Arthur! I'd like to draw Arthur round the old city in a car of triumph, as we used to chair our city members. I mean that wretch of a Galloway. He ought to be taken up for an impostor. Why did he go and tell Arthur he should send him to London if he didn't mean to?"

Gerald Yorke let his fork fall in a semi-passion, and nearly chipped the beautiful china plate: was *all* the conversation to be monopolised by Roland and his miserable interests? It was high time to interfere. Picking up the fork with an air, he cleared his throat.

"Sir Vincent comes into about four thousand a-year, entailed property. We went in to hear the will read by old Greatorex. It's not much, is it?"

"Not to one reared to the notions Vincent Yorke has been," said Hamish. "But he has more than that, I presume?"

"Some odds and ends, I believe: I asked Greatorex. And there's the little homestead, down in Surrey. Sir Richard's liabilities die with him. Perhaps he had wiped them off beforehand?"

"I'm sure he had," said Roland, with good-natured warmth. "Oh, we hear a good deal in our office. As to four thousand a-year being little for one man, you should have been at Port Natal, Gerald, and you'd estimate it differently."

"To a man about town, like myself, it seems a starvation pittance, considering what Sir Vincent will have to do out of it," returned Gerald, loftily, speaking to any at table, rather than to his brother.

"That's just it," said Roland. "If I were a man about town, and had not been out to Port Natal and learnt the value of money, it might seem so to me. Dick won't find it enough, I daresay. I should think a rent of four hundred a-year riches!"

Gerald curled his lip. "No doubt; and some pigs to drive."

"I'd like a pig, Roland," cried Nelly Channing, turning to him, and unconsciously creating a diversion. "A pretty little pig, with blue ribbons."

"As pretty as you," said Roland, squeezing her. "You mean a guinea-pig, little stupid. As to driving pigs, Gerald—it's not a very good employment, of course; but you see I had to do what I was put to—or starve."

"I'd rather starve than do it," retorted Gerald. "And so would any one with the instincts of a gentleman."

"You only go out there and try what starving is; you'd tell a different tale," said Roland, maintaining his good-humour. "Starving there means starving!"

Some one of those turns in conversation which occur so naturally, brought round the subject to Mr. Ollivera. Roland, imparting sundry revelations of his home-life at Mrs. Jones's—or, as he called her still, Mrs. Jenkins—mentioned the clergyman's name. "Don't you mean to call and see him?" he asked of William Yorke. "You'd better."

But Mr. Yorke declined. "My time in London is so very short," he said; "I go home to-morrow. Besides, I have really no acquaintance with Mr. Ollivera. We never met but on one occasion."

"When you lent him your surplice," spoke Roland. And William Yorke looked up in surprise.

"What do you know about it?"

"Oh, I know a great deal," returned Roland. "I say—why did you not attend that night, yourself? You promised."

"I did not promise. All I said was, that I would consider of it. Upon reflection, I thought it better not to go. The circumstances were very peculiar; and the Dean, had he come to know of it, might have taken me to task."

"Not he," said independent Roland. "The Dean's made of sterling gold."

"What sort of a chanter does Tom make?" enquired Hamish.

"Very fair; very fair, indeed," replied William Yorke, some patronage in his tone, meant for the absent young minor canon. Consciously vain of his own excellence in chanting, Mr. Yorke could but accord comparative praise to Tom Channing's. The vanity was not without cause; Mr. Yorke's sweet and sonorous voice was wont to fill the aisles of the old cathedral with its melody.

Just as the tea was over, one of the servants came in with a folded weekly review, hot from the press, on her silver waiter, and presented

it to her master. Hamish opened it with a slight apology, and was glancing at its pages, when he folded it again with a sudden movement, and quietly put it in his pocket. His sight, in the moment's confusion, partially faded, a bright hectic lighted his cheek, his whole heart leaped up within him, as with a rushing, blissful sense of realized hope. For he had seen that a review of his book was there.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### AS IRON INTO THE SOUL.

THE change in his face was remarkable. It was as though a blight had passed over it and withered the hopeful life out.

He sat with the journal in his hand—the authoritative “Snarler”—and read the cruel lines over and over again. When, in the solitude of his own study, they first met his eager eye, skimming them rapidly, and their purport was gathered in almost at a glance, a kind of sick faintness seized upon his heart, and he hastily put away the paper as though it were some terrible thing he dared not look further upon.

The shock was awful—and the word is not used in its often light sense; the disappointment something not to be described. After the departure of his guests, Roland and Gerald, and William Yorke had gone by his own wish to take home Annabel and to make a late call on Mrs. Bede Greatorex—if haply that fashionable dame might be found at home—Hamish Channing had passed into his study; and there, alone with himself and his emotions, he once more unfolded the paper. All the while he had sat with it in his pocket, a sweet, tumultuous hope had been stirring his bosom; he could hardly forbear, in his eagerness to realize it, telling them to make haste and depart. And when they were really going, it seemed that they were a month over it. He stood up wishing them good night.

“By the way, Hamish, I should think your book would soon be getting its reviews,” spoke crafty Gerald, who had seen the journal brought in, and knew what was in it. “I hope you’ll get good ones, old fellow.”

And the wish was spoken with so much apparent genuineness, the tone of the voice had in it so vast an amount of gushing feeling, that Hamish gratefully wrung the offered hand. After that, even had he been of a less ingenuous nature, he would have suspected the whole world of abusing his book, rather than Gerald Yorke.

Shut up in his study, the lamp beside him, he unfolded the paper with trembling expectation, and heart beating with happiness. It was one of those moments which come in all our lives, that must stamp

itself on the memory for ever. He looked, and looked. And then put the pages away in a kind of terror.

Never, in this age of bitter reviews, had a more bitter one than that been penned. But for his intense unsuspicion, for his own upright simple-mindedness, he might possibly have recognized Gerald Yorke's slashing style. Gerald, as its writer, never once occurred to him. After awhile, when the first brunt of the shock had passed—and it was almost as a shock of death—he took up the paper again, and read the article through.

His hair grew damp with perspiration; his face burnt with a hot shame. With this apparently candid, but most damnatory review before his eyes, it seemed to him that his book must be indeed bad. The critique was ably written, and it attacked him from all sides and on all points. Gerald Yorke had taken pains with that as he had never taken pains with any article before. It had been, so to say, days in construction. One portion would be altered to-day, one to-morrow; and the result was that it *told*. The chief characteristic of the whole was sarcastic mockery. The scholarship of the book was attacked, (and that scholarship—that is, of its writer—formed the chief point of envy in a covert corner of Gerald's heart); its taste, its style, its every thing. The pen had been steeped five fathoms deep in gall. Rounded periods spoke of the work's utter worthlessness, and affectionately warned the public against reading it with quite fatherly care. It called the author an impudent upstart; it demanded to know what he meant by fostering such a book on the public; it wondered how he had found a publisher; it almost prayed the gods, that preside over literary careers, to deliver unhappy readers from James Channing. Abuse and ridicule; ridicule and abuse; they rang the changes one upon another. Hamish read; he turned back and read again; and the fatal characters burnt themselves into his brain as with a ruthless fire.

What a reward it was! Speaking only as a recompense for his devotion and labour, leaving aside for the moment the higher considerations, how cruel was the return! The devoted lad, read of in history, concealed a fox in his bosom, and it repaid him by gnawing at his vitals. That reward was not more remorsefully cruel than this. Where was the use of all Hamish Channing's patient industry, his persevering endurance, his burning the midnight candle, to bring forth *this* fruit? To what end the never-ceasing toil and care? While Gerald Yorke had been flourishing in society, Hamish Channing was toiling. Burning his candles, so to say, at both ends! The unwearied industry, the patient continuance in labour, the ever-buoyant, trustful hope!—all had been his.

Does the public realize what it is, I wonder, to exercise this brain-work day by day, and often also night by night, week after week, month after month, year after year? A book is put into the hands of a

reading man—or say a woman, if you will—and he devours it with ardour or coolness, more or less of either, as the case may be, and makes his comments afterwards with complaisance, and says the book is a nice book, and seems almost to think it has been brought out for his especial delectation. But does he ever cast a reflection on the toil that book has cost the writer? Does he look up to him with even a thought of gratitude? Generally speaking, no. In the midst, perhaps, of very adverse circumstances, of long-continued sickness, of headache, heartache, many aches; when the inward spirit is fainting at life's bitter troubles, and it would seem in vain to struggle more, the labour must yet be done. Look at Hamish Channing—his is no ideal case. His day's work over, he got to this work—the night's—and wrote on, until his mind and body were alike weary. Whilst others played, he toiled; when others were abroad at their banquetings and revellings, idling away their hours in what the world calls society, and Gerald Yorke making one amidst them, he was shut up in his room, labouring on persistently. And this was his reward!

The best energies of his power and intellect had Hamish Channing given to the book; the gift of genius, which had certainly been bestowed largely upon him, was exercised and brought to bear. No merit to him for that; he could not help exercising it. It appeared to him, this writing for his fellow men, to be the one special end for which he was sent into the world—where every man has his appointed and peculiar aptitude for some one calling or duty, though it happens that a vast many never find it out until too late. A man reared, as had been James Channing, to good; anxious to live here in the single-minded fulfilment of every duty, using the world only as a passage to a better, can but write as a responsible agent; whether he may be working at a religious tract or a story of fiction, he does it as to his Creator, imploring day by day that he may be helped in it. Had Hamish been required to write without that sense of responsibility upon him, he would have put aside his pen.

And the disappointment! the rude, pitiless, condemning shock! It might be that such was necessary; that it had been sent direct from heaven. The least sinful man on earth may have need of such.

Again Hamish read the article from beginning to end. Read, and re-read it. It was as if the lines possessed the fatal fascination of the basilisk, attracting him against his will. He writhed under the executioner's knife, while he submitted to it. The book was a good and brilliant work, betraying its genius in every line, well conceived, well plotted, ably written. It was one of those that take the whole imagination of the reader captive; one that a man is all the better for reading, and rises up from with a subdued spirit, hushed breath, and a glowing heart. While enchaining man's deepest interest, it yet insensibly led his thoughts to Heaven. Simple though it was in its pure



Saxon diction, its sentiments were noble, generous, and exalted. Not a thought was there to offend, not a line that, for its purity, might not have been placed in the hands of his child. Modest, as all gifted with true genius are, yet possessing (for that must always be), a latent consciousness of his great power, Hamish had looked forward for success to his book, as surely as he had looked for Heaven. That it could be a failure, he had simply never thought of; that it should be badly received, ridiculed, condemned, written down, had not entered his imagination. Had he been told such might be the result, he would have quietly answered that it was impossible.

In all matters where the mind and feelings, the inward, silent hopes and fears, are deeply touched, it cannot be but that we are sensitively alive to the opinions of our fellow men, and swayed by their judgment. As Hamish Channing read and re-read, learning the cruel sentences almost by rote, his heart failed within him. For the time being, he thought he must have erred in supposing the book so good; that it must be a foolish and mistaken book, deserving only of their sharp criticism; and a sense of humiliation, than which nothing could be more intensely painful, took possession of his spirit.

But the belief could not remain. The mood changed again. The book resumed nearly its estimated place in his mind, and the sense of humiliation was superseded by the smarting conviction of cruel injustice. What had he or his book done that they should be so reviled?

"Lord, thou knowest all things! surely I have not deserved this!" irrepressibly broke from the depths of his anguish.

No, he had not deserved it. As some others have not, who yet have had to bear it. It is one of the world's hard lessons, one that very few are appointed to learn. Injustice, and evil, and oppression exist in the world, and must exist until its end. Only then shall we understand wherefore they are permitted. Pardon, reader, if a line or two seem to be repeated. The many months of toil, the patient night-labour, that but for the hope-spring rising in the buoyant heart might have been found too wearing; the self-denial ever exercised; the weary night watching and working—all had been thrown back upon Hamish Channing, and rendered, as it were, nugatory. Try and picture to yourselves what this labour is; its aspirations of reward, its hopes of appreciation—and for a wickedly disposed man, or simply a carelessly indifferent man, or a vain, presumptuous man, or a man that has some petty spite to gratify against author or publisher, or rival reviewer, or a man that writes but in wanton idleness, to dash it down with a few strokes of a pen!

Such things have been. They will be again. But if Gerald Yorke, and others like him, would consider how they violate the divine law of enjoined kindness, it might be that the pen would now and then pause.



Would Gerald have to answer for it at the Great Day of Reckoning? Ah, that is a question very little thought of; one perhaps difficult to answer. He had set himself deliberately in his foolish envy, in his ill-conditioned spirit, to work ill to Hamish Channing: to put down and write down the book that he knew was depended on to bring back its return, that was loved and cherished almost as life. It was within the range of possibility that he might work more ill than he bargained for. Heaven is not in the habit of saying to man by way of reminder when he gets up in a morning, "I am looking at you:" but it has told us such a thing as that every secret work and thought and action shall be brought to light, whether it be good or whether it be evil. Gerald ignored that, after the fashion of this busy world; and was perfectly self-complacent under the ignoring.

Only upon such a mind as Hamish Channing's, with his nervous attributes of genius, his refined sensitiveness, could the review have brought home its worst bitterness. Fortunately such minds are very rare. Gerald Yorke had little conception of the extent of its fruit. *He* would have set on and sworn off his anger, and called the writer, who could thus stab in the dark, a false coward, and sent him by wishes to all kinds of unorthodox places, and vowed aloud to his friends that he should like to horsewhip or shoot him. Thus the brunt, with him, would have been worked off; never so much as touching the vital feelings—if Gerald possessed any. It was another thing with Hamish Channing. He could almost have died, rather than have spoken of the attack to any living man; and if forced to it, as we are sometimes forced to unwelcome things, it would have brought the red blush of shame to his sensitive brow, to his shrinking spirit.

He sat on; on, with his aching heart. One hand was pressed upon his chest: a dull pain had seated itself there. Never again, as it seemed to him, should he look up from the blow. More and more the cruelty and the injustice struck upon him. Does it so strike upon you, reader? The book was not perfection (I never yet met with one that was, in spite of what the reviews chose to affirm of Mr. Gerald Yorke's), but it was at least written in an earnest, truthful spirit to the utmost of the abilities God had given him. How had it invoked this requital? Hamish pondered the question, and could not answer it. What had he done to be shown up to the public; a butt for any, that would, to pitch scorn at? There was no appeal; there could be no redress. The book had been held forth to the world—at least to the thousands of it that would read the "Snarler"—as a bad and incapable book, one they must avoid as the work of a miserably presumptive and incapable man.

A slight movement in the next room, and Mrs. Channing came in with Nelly. Miss Nelly, in consideration of the late substantial tea had not been sent to bed at the customary hour. Hamish slipped the review inside his table-desk, and greeted them with a smile, sweet-tem-

pered as ever under the blow. But his wife saw that some change lay on his face.

"Is anything the matter, Hamish? You look—worn: as if you had received some ill news."

"Do I? I am a little tired, Ellen. It has been very hot to-day."

"I thought you were not going to work to-night."

"Oh, I am not working. Well, young lady, what now?"

Miss Nelly had climbed on his knees. She had been brought in to say good-night.

"When's the ship coming home, papa?"

He suddenly bent down and hid his face on the child's bright one. Heaven alone knew what the moment's suffering was, and how he contrived not to betray it.

"Will it come to-morrow, papa?"

"We shall see, darling. I don't know."

The subdued, patient tone had something of hopelessness in it. Mrs. Channing thought he must be very tired.

"Come, Nelly; it is late, you know."

He kissed the child tenderly as ever, but so quietly, and whispered a prayer for God to bless her; his tone was one of subdued pain, almost as though his heart were breaking. And Nelly went dancing out, talking of the ship and the good things it was to bring.

Quite immediately, a gentleman was shown in. It was the publisher of the book. Late though the hour was, he had come in some perturbation, bringing a copy of the "Snarler."

"Have you any enemy, Mr. Channing?" was nearly the first question he asked, when he found Hamish had seen the article.

"Not one in the wide world, so far as I know."

"The review of your book is so remarkably unjust, so entirely at variance with fact and truth, that I should say only an enemy could have done it," persisted the publisher. "Look, besides, at the rancour of its language, its evident animus; I scarcely ever read so aggravated an attack."

But still Hamish could only reiterate his conviction. "I have no enemy."

"Well, it is a great pity; a calamity, in short. When once an author's reputation is made and he is a favourite with the public, bad reviews cannot harm him: but to a first book, where the author is unknown, they are sometimes fatal."

"Yes, I suppose they are," acquiesced Hamish.

"We must wait now for the others, Mr. Channing. And hope that they will be the reverse of this. But it is a sad thing—and, I must say, a barefaced injustice."

Nothing more could be said, nothing done. The false review was in the hands of the public, and Hamish and his publisher were alike

powerless to arrest or remedy it. The gentleman went out, leaving Hamish alone.

Alone with his blow and its anguish. He felt like one who has been living all night in a sweet dream and been rudely awakened to some terrible reality. The sanguine hopes of years were dashed away; life's future prospects had broken themselves up. If ever the iron entered into the soul of man, it had surely passed into that of James Channing.

The injustice told upon him worse than all; the unmerited stab-wound would damage him for aye. In his bosom's bitter strife, he almost dared to ask how men could be permitted thus to prey one upon another, and not be checked by Heaven's lightning. But, to that there might be no answer: others have asked it before him.

"So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun: and behold the tears of such as were oppressed, and they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power: but they had no comforter. Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead more than the living which are yet alive."

Involuntarily, with a strange force, these words passed through the mind of James Channing."

But the wise King—and God had given him more than earthly wisdom—could give no explanation of why this should be.

*(To be continued.)*



## AMONG THE PICTURES.

THE author of "Companions of my Solitude," one of the most thoughtful writers of our thoughtful nation, has spoken more than once of the charm of accidental pleasures. "The enjoyments of travel, in my view, are to be found in the chance delights, rather than in the official part of travelling. It is the chance felicities in minor things which are so pleasant in a journey. You feel that a bit of good fortune has happened to you, and you are happier all the day for it. It is the same thing in the journey of life: pleasure falls into no plan."

It is he too who somewhere recounts, how, having gone to see some great show, he could not push through the crowd around the closed entrance, but resignedly took up a post among the hindermost against a small door, shut fast. When lo! on a sudden, this small door opened and he was among the first to enter the desired place.

Something like this happened to us yesterday. In an almost intolerable heat, we had toiled up to London from our country home, to hear Nilsson's great concert. But, alas! when we reached St. James's Hall, almost an hour before the music should begin, we heard the terrible announcement, "No tickets left." That is, there were no tickets under some fabulous price which we could not afford to pay. We turned away with that uncomfortable sensation which is called "thoroughly sold."

But, although we found no side-door to admit us to the concert, we had our chance pleasure nevertheless. Walking disconsolately down the Haymarket, we passed Maclean's, and turned idly in. Behind the shop or counting-house which one enters first, are two small rooms. The one contains a case of china and other artistic objects, some water-colours, and chromo-lithographs; the second is hung round with oil-paintings. As we entered, we were at once attracted to a large and very striking landscape in the place of honour on the opposite wall; "Damascus," taken from a spur of the Anti-Lebanon. The artist was Mr. Church. The view was this: The spectator seemed to be standing on a rugged foreground of the barren rock. To the left rose the great stern hills, ruddy with a sunset behind them, but grey on the shadowed side, and rushing down, hard and dry, to bathe their feet in a wide sea of verdure. This was the great oasis of Damascus, all one broad, sunny, rippling mass of level woods, broken by blue meandering streams, and in the midst the white and glittering towers of the city. But there is no tameness in this verdant plain of apricot and olive trees, for the shadow of a great rock is on the land; the rugged summit on the left

with the sunset behind it, flings its outline in cool grey shade almost to the feet of the queen-like city, enthroned in her plenty.

Besides this picture, we noticed two charming landscapes, by Bilders, a Belgian artist, very cool in colour, and exquisitely worked. Then we passed on to the autotypic offices, two doors farther down.

The invention of autotype is certainly, for those who love pictures, a great gain and benefit. The original sketches or engravings of the great masters, instead of passing through the hands of inferior artists, are thus reproduced for the public in *fac simile*. For instance, there was a Lucretia of Marc Antonio, which one of us had seen sold for seventy guineas, now to be had for a shilling, and *perfect*, not marred by false engraving or copyists. True, it lacks the association of the master's very hand, but for all artistic purposes, it has the value of the original.

The nature and history of the autotypic process are as follows:— Ordinary photography has been proved useless for the permanent reproduction of great works. Nothing can prevent its fading. The authorities of the British Museum, disappointed by its failure, have refused to let the great works under their care be reproduced by photography, until a more permanent impression can be secured. Autotype, although too young for proof, seems to give assurance of its stability, by the fact that the very medium used by the artist—carbon, sepia, red, or other coloured chalk—can be employed in the reproduction, which is thus no more liable to fade than is the original drawing. There is not space here to describe the various steps of the photographic process between 1839 and the present day, with the discoveries and failures of Ponton, Becquerel, Fox Talbot, &c. In 1856, invention in this direction was stimulated by a prize of 2,000 francs, offered by the Duc de Lugues. Nothing of great importance was achieved, however, till M. Fargier's discovery, in 1861, of the mode of reproducing original drawings by means of gelatinous pigments spread upon the glass plate, but this plan was found impracticable for pictures of any size. The improvements made on the process by Mr. Swan, the inventor of autotype, are carefully described in a pamphlet printed for the company, and to be had at their office. We spent a delightful hour there in turning over portfolios full of permanent *fac similes* of the glorious sketches in the Louvre and the Uffizj Gallery, at Florence. For art-lovers of limited means it is a great boon to be enabled to obtain such works as the following:—"Christ Borne to the Tomb," Barocci, *gs. 6d.*; Landscape, Rubens, *gs. 6d.*; the original sketch of his celebrated "Deposition from the Cross," for the same price; "St. Joseph with Christ and St. John," Guercino, *4s.*; A Landscape, by Svaneveldt, *5s. 6d.*, almost equal in richness and massy foliage to that king of woodland pictures—Ruysdael's "Avenue," in the Dresden Gallery.

Beyond the autotypes was a small room containing oil-paintings.

There was a delicious bit by our friend Bilders, whom we were glad to meet again; a mill and a glassy pond in a cool shadowy wood. And there was a fiery landscape by Linnell, which, on such a day, made one feel quite inflammatory. The price of the Linnell was £400; of the Bilders £56; proof of the truth of an observation in the "Saturday Review" that: "The English cherish the faith that no people can paint nature as well as themselves, and—cherish the prescriptive Linnell conflagration sunset as the phase of nature in most felicitous antagonism with the washed-out greys of domestic life."

Having seen two collections of pictures, our thirst for art was still insatiate, and we wandered down to the French and Belgian Gallery in Pall Mall. Our first impression, on glancing round at the 250 pictures, or thereabouts, was: "How charming to have so few to see!" In this respect, it bore admirably the contrast with our interminable rooms of Burlington House. "To endure them, one stands in constant need of sincerity, to prevent you from worrying yourself by looking at things which you do not really care about, and which you will only have to talk about in future; (why should you care to talk about them?)\*"

Our second impression was that of a general resting tint of cool grey. At first, to English eyes, this made the walls look dull, but each picture was found on examination to be much the more agreeable on account of it. The minute care and delicacy of even the smallest, was startling, and upon the whole an unpleasant conviction was forced upon us that in all our English studios we have but two or three masters at most, and those our very best, who for truth to nature, and exquisite choice, and harmony of colouring, can rival the paintings on these walls. Even in the slightest subjects, such poor things as would suit the tops of French plum-boxes,—a morning-call or the last new dress of the artist's wife, there is this same excellence of finish, with care in the adaptation of colour. The *genre* pictures have, as a rule, more interesting subjects than those in our own Academy, and possess a grace and delicacy almost rivalling Mieris or Ostade. Two of them deserve special notice; it is worth while to sit for half an hour before either of them.

"The Empty Cradle," (15) Duverger, is a sad, simple, touching story of a little life gone away from the home which it made bright and happy.

It is a French peasant's home, humble and cleanly. The dear little wicker cradle with the sheets all ruffled and turned back, and no small golden head on the pillow, is standing on some chairs. The poor mother, who has just returned from the burial, is leaning over it, trying so hard to keep back her sobs, and feel that "it is well with the child." One sees the effort in her unaffected reticent attitude; in the strong grasp of her hand on the basket-work. The *grand'mère* stands behind her, sad but tearless. She is old; the source of tears is dried up with

\* Friends in Council, *Essay on Worry*.



her; she knows that there are deeper things than death to weep for. Yet she too feels that the house will be very lonely without that crowing laugh, those merry little jumps and gambols. The dog looks up and wonders what is amiss. A little awe-struck boy peeps in at the door, feeling that something mysterious and dreadful now surrounds all remembrance of that which once was only "the baby." All the accessories are fine and true. The peasant's pride, the best bed, with red pillars, and sombre-green hangings with yellow fringe; the stool by the cradle covered with a cloth, a guttering candle and a dish of holy water on it, with a twig for an asperge; the doll tossed in a corner; the two scripture prints on the wall; the little image of the Virgin, with a lamp burning before it; the press—half cupboard and half shelves, with all the household gods ranged on it in methodical rows. The picture is very beautiful, and very affecting, and goes to one's heart. One knows the people, loves them, and longs to hear of them again.

"Waiting," (112) Israels; is a rich bit of colour, brown and mellow. A little peasant lass has got the dinner ready; not a costly meal; just a basin of potatoes, over which she has put her own plate to keep the heat in. But only a very little steam is rising now; father is very late and he is not coming yet, though the little girl, with her pinched hungry face, is looking so hard for him over the muslin blind. There is no cloth on the table; the family possesses only one knife and fork, father has the knife—how he will shovel in his potatoes with it presently! There is a ragged apple-tree outside the window; the light comes feebly through its foliage; the poor room is full of rich brown shadows. The picture is marked "Sold." I wish I were the purchaser, though I should lose temper with father while the little lass is getting hungrier every minute.

In "More Free than Welcome," (25) Vibert, the hands are a study of marvellous delicacy. It is a funny little picture. A lady in grey satin trimmed with pink, is going to give, oh! such a nice little supper to a smart gentleman of the olden time! There is champagne cooling among vine-leaves, and all sorts of good things on the side-board; when in marches, with a most polite bow, the Father-Confessor, a very young Père. One would be really tempted to fear (if he were not a father confessor), that he is a little sly, and enjoying the confusion of the smartly-dressed couple.


The landscapes can only be mentioned, not described. The following attracted us particularly:—"On the Seine," (18) Rölofs; three Wallachian scenes by Schreger, (16, 27, 234). "A Sedgy Stream," (195) Troyon; and a "Passing Shower," (208) Lömmen.

There are a few of those thin affected pictures which, in our civil insular fashion, we might call particularly *French*. Such are "The Birth of Venus," (184) Cabanel; "In the Corn-field," (191) W. Bouguereau; "The Two Angels," (261) Merle.

We noticed but two portraits; a poor thing of the Prince Imperial, and one of a lady, excellently well-arranged. She has auburn hair, and a simple child-like piquante face, but not pretty. The dress is perfectly chosen, an old-looking, dull sort of a sea-green satin; a square-cut bodice, trimmed with lace; a rich cloak of brown fur, thrown over one shoulder. There are great depth and transparency about the colouring.

There are no historical pictures; but two, in their tragical interest, almost reach that higher grade of art. Both are by the same artist,—Clairin,—both on the same subject. In one (138), a group of haggard, evil-faced women are lighting a fire of sea-weed on a low, rocky shore, under a gloomy sky; making false signals to betray the poor ships. They are splendid women, though so wicked. One bearing on her head a great basket of the weed, which she is about to fling on the treacherous flame, is as grand as any Judith. In 183, the husbands of these women—the wreckers—are seen at their hateful work. A battered vessel is tossing on the ebb; two men are carrying between them the body of a drowned or half-drowned comrade. In the foreground, sheltered by a low, sandy rising, crouch the miserable evil-doers; one is levelling a gun at the two who are bearing away their dead.

So we departed; a little humbled in our general views of English art, but feeling, as Helps says, that "A bit of good fortune had happened to us, and that we were happier all the day for it."



## LOVE AND WAR.

### I.

WHSOEVER has visited Hällstadt, in the Salzkammergut, will remember it as one of the most picturesque and secluded villages to be found in the length and breadth of Austria.

This quaint, old-world dwelling-place is situated at the opening of a romantic, but narrow, ravine, which loses itself in the snow-capped mountains. Here, upon the extreme verge of the lake, some eighteen hundred souls are gathered together. Their habitations look as if they were the natural outgrowth of the rocks; so curiously, yet so fittingly, are they perched upon "cliff and scar." It is a nucleus of civilization amidst the wildest solitudes, amidst the grandest scenery, united only with the world by the common tie of commercial industry. The little place owes its existence to the vicinity of the Imperial Salt Mines. So curiously and irregularly has the village grown, that the principal communication between the houses is by means of steps, and—except by a perilous mountain-path—the place can only be reached from the outer world by boat.

If it were not for the innate cheerfulness of German nature, this spot would seem but a dreary dwelling-place, for during three months of the winter, the inhabitants never see the sun rise above the lofty Dachstein. However, in summer Hällstadt is both bright and gay, for anglers and tourists crowd thither, attracted by the excellent fishing and the rare beauty of the scenery.

The religious persecutions of the 17th century in Austria left a nest-egg for Protestantism in this remote corner, and at the present time no less than one half of the community belongs to the Reformed Church.

Not since the 13th century has the discord of war intruded upon this remote village, but in those troublesome times the Emperor Albert built what is called Rudolph's Tower, perched on a rock a thousand feet above the town, to defend his salt mines from the rapacious hands of the Archbishop of Salzburg.

In the spring of 1866, and long before that time, there lived in the village a man by the name of Zahnagger: he was a widower, with one daughter, and they kept a small inn, or *gasthaus* much frequented by the *employés* at the salt works. The daughter, Käthchen, was very pretty and very wilful, as only children are apt to be.

The "Goldne Schiff" is a picturesque old inn of the true Styrian type. It was built of wood which, coloured by smoke and age, had assumed a deep red hue, precious to the artistic eye. Access to the second story of such a house is generally gained by an external staircase, which

has a balcony sheltered by the overhanging roof. When Käthchen was at leisure, she would sit on this balcony with her knitting, and from thence she could see the little pier, where all the boats landed their passengers.

During the season, tourists from all parts visit Hällstadt, and these strangers were always objects of curiosity to the young girl. Few foreigners ever turned in at the "Goldne Schiff," for it was not deemed worthy of a notice in the guide-books. However, Käthchen had plenty of guests, at least through the summer; tables were then placed outside, in front of the inn, and of an evening the benches were generally well-filled with people of various grades. Amongst those who frequented the place, the *verwalter*, or inspector of mines, was usually the loudest talker, and those who lived on official patronage the best listeners. Hardly a day passed that some one did not come, either on business or pleasure, from Gosaumill—a village at the other end of the lake—or from Aussee, in Styria, nor was the party complete without one or two priests and a couple or more poor students on their travels.

In a simple state of society where news is orally communicated, there is a habit of much greater sociability amongst strangers than in cities and towns where every man retires behind the barricade of his own newspaper.

Joseph Zahnagger, the innkeeper, had grown fat and lazy; he sat with his guests, as in duty bound, and nodded his approval to all official politics, but he did not trouble himself about much else. A further proof of his philosophical temperament was, that he submitted to the inevitable tyranny of womankind. His daughter ruled every one in the house, and some people who were not of the household, as a certain Johanne Deissinger, the miller's son, knew to his cost. She plagued, teased, and bewitched her victim as if she had received the benefits of a superior female education.

Deissinger was worthy of the maiden's time and trouble, for he was one of the finest young fellows in all the country round. He had seen something of life, for he had served his time in the army, and belonged now to one of the reserve corps. In religion he was a Protestant, his father being an excellent type of that somewhat austere community; he himself took matters more lightly, as people are apt to do who inherit opinions.

Nothing had occurred to disturb the ordinary course of events at Hällstadt for a long time, when it chanced, one day towards the end of April, that a stranger came to the village. The traveller with his modest bag came in the Gosaumill boat, and stepping on the pier, looked about him for a place of entertainment, and finally turned in at the "Goldne Schiff." He had a pale, worn countenance, though still young, and his eyes had a far-seeking look, which betokens the habit of thought rather than of action.

Entering the public room, he threw down his bag, and addressing Käthchen, with an air of diffidence asked if he could be accommodated there for a few days.

As Käthchen laid down her work and rose to answer the new comer, he could not fail to be struck with her appearance—for German though he was, he was a dweller in the town, and knew nothing of the picturesque fashion of a Styrian maiden's garments, which in this instance consisted of a short coloured skirt over a black petticoat, a close-fitting black velvet bodice, with a snow white kerchief crossed over the neck. Round her throat Käthchen wore several chains of silver, attached to a filagree clasp, set with garnets. Her magnificent dark hair was exquisitely braided, and fastened up by a silver arrow. Her firm step, her rounded figure, her clear complexion, all told of youth and health.

How different was the aspect of the poor traveller—he looked weak and pale, as though suffering from a recent illness. His very step was at once feeble and cautious. When he asked the maiden if he could be accommodated, Käthchen assented with a cheery voice that was in itself a welcome; and stepping forward with ready alacrity, she assisted the stranger to unfasten the *rucksack* from his back, in which he carried his *wettermantel* and a few odd things that could not be stowed away in his carpet-bag.

Käthchen was the least reticent and the most inquisitive being of female creation, and as the stranger was not like the ordinary tourists who visited Hällstadt, or like the people who came hither on business, she began at once to wonder and ask questions. If the traveller had had the reserve of ten Englishmen concentrated in his individual person, he could not have resisted the interrogations of his hostess. Moreover, it is the habit of the *bourgeois* German to speak with great openness about his affairs.

The *gast-stube* of the "Goldne Schiff," at the period described, was a large long room with an unceiled roof formed of huge beams. The walls of paneled wood, were hung with relics of the chase, stags' horns and chamois' heads. At the entrance was a cup of holy water and a crucifix rudely carved in wood and painted in colours like life, or rather like death.

Käthchen spread a cloth over one end of the long table, and begging the traveller to be seated, she ordered for him a dish of *bock Hähne* (chicken fried in lard), and another dish called *schmarren*—a sort of pancake fried in butter, and eaten with or without meat. She had previously brought a bottle of Kremmünster wine from the cave, taking care to add that it was a present from the monks of that monastery, and had been brought by her father from their hunting Schloss on the Alm See.

In the course of the meal, Käthchen, who sat knitting at the oppo-



site side of the table, elicited from the stranger the following particulars of his history. He was a professor, he said, at the University of M——, the only son of a widowed mother. It appeared that he had lately fallen into bad health from overwork, and had been ordered by the doctor to travel for a time.

At first he was extremely shy with Käthchen, but her curiosity and her sympathy, together with the reviving influence of meat and wine, opened his heart—in fact, they were talking together with the freedom of old friends—when the sharp elastic tread of Johanne Deissinger's feet, sounded on the threshold. The young miller had just come in from a rifle-match that had taken place at the other end of the lake—he wore the Jäger dress, so familiar to us in pictures, consisting of green stockings, short breeches, black velvet coat, and a pointed hat with an eagle's feather.

Max Vennedy (for so the stranger was called) rose on Deissinger's entrance, and the two men looked at each other with that instinctive feeling of antagonism common to all male creatures when they confront each other for the first time. After a mute salutation had passed between them, Deissinger crossed over to where Käthchen was sitting, and took from his hat a bunch of *edelweiss*—a peculiar white flower, which grows in the most inaccessible places, generally on the verge of the glaciers. It is the mountaineer's token of perils passed, and is often brought back to his lady-love, being considered an emblem of all that is pure and beautiful.

"Ah, they are for me," cried Käthchen, jumping up, and putting out her hand for the flowers.

"You make too sure," answered Deissinger, drawing back.

Käthchen, it must be observed, had no instinctive antagonism to men.

"Have you been to the Karls Eisfeld?" asked Käthchen, choosing to ignore Johanne's ill-humour.

"I was there yesterday. I walked over the mountains to Hintersee on business for my father; but you don't ask me about the shooting—I made the best marks," he added, his face relaxing into a smile.

Käthchen clapped her hands, saying, "I knew you would—I knew you would; now tell me about the shooting, and about everything—put down your hat—have some beer or coffee—Babette shall bring it for you, while I listen."

She stood near him, resting her hand on his shoulder, while a playful smile curled her red lips. Käthchen was very fond of the mock, deferential attitude.

Vennedy, finding no interest in the conversation, had taken a book from his bag, and had walked out into the village.

"A poor student I should suppose, if he were not too old for the trade," remarked Deissinger, when the traveller left them.



"He's something of the kind ; he's a full-grown student ; a professor," answered Käthchen, "he can't help, poor fellow, having a face like a hatchet, and a body like a fiddle-bow. Johanne, how glad I am that you are not like him !"

Deissinger gave her a kiss for this noble sentiment ; and forthwith Käthchen took the bunch of *edelweiss*, and said in the most beseeching way, "I may have them—may I not, Johanne?" Of course she had the flowers.

When Johanne Deissinger walked home that evening, he made up his mind he would ask his father to give up the home and the mill to him, that he and Käthchen might marry ; for as matters stood, she was the plague of his life. The request was not unusual ; it is the custom in Austria for the old people to retire to a smaller house, and to give up the active superintendence of affairs to their sons, when they bring home a wife.

## II.

MAX VENNEDY'S advent at Hällstadt came about in this manner : he had been ill from overwork, and he was enjoined by his doctor to be constantly in the open air ; it happened that this locality promised to be interesting to him as the habitat of several rare plants. Botany had been to him a recreation from severer studies, but hitherto he had pursued the subject by consulting the herbarium of the Museum ; of the growing plants in the fresh fields he knew nothing.

Vennedy's history was somewhat sad ; his mother—the only relation he had ever known—had married above her station, and was left a widow early in life, with very small means. Max was ever a good boy, and devoted himself heart and soul to study. He learnt soon to concentrate his thoughts upon the object of his ambition, a professorship at the university of his native town. The circumstance of his social position, and the extreme poverty of his mother had kept him apart from the associations natural to his age ; when he grew up, the college library was the boundary of his world : such men are not uncommon in Germany.

Vennedy fought the good fight, and gained the object of his wishes ; he was appointed to a professor's chair, with a modest, but for him, sufficient salary. But success had been sought at almost too great a price ; he fell ill from overwork, and his complaint, more nervous than physical, required a perfect rest from all mental effort. His friends at M—— arranged that he should be released for a while from his duties, and he was sent to vegetate in the country, anywhere that his fancy, and some half-excuse about botanical studies, might lead him. The simple accident of a particular flower growing in the valley of the Plassenstein above Hällstadt was destined to influence all his future life.

The day after his arrival, Vennedy found himself so well-pleased with

his quarters, that he made arrangements with Joseph Zahnagger to be lodged at the "Goldne Schiff" for a couple of weeks. The modest charges of the little hostelry suited his purse, and the place interested him in many ways. He could visit the salt mines, collect fossils from the limestone rocks, and walk up the valley of the Waldbach-strub, or wander far up amongst the perilous mountain-paths in search of botanical specimens.

It is almost impossible to describe the extraordinary effect which the beauties of nature made upon this overworked man of the city : hitherto he had lived in the past—with books, not with men. He had spent the best hours of the day within four walls. When first brought into close communion with nature, he was at a loss to understand her language ; he insensibly wished that the vast expanse of mountain and valley, and all the sublime grandeur of the real world around him, could be reduced to painted pictures, or written words, that he might study according to his wont. Nature in her material reality was at first too great for the focus of his mental vision, so much are we creatures of habit.

Soon—very soon this artificial feeling left him, and the man of books flung himself into the renovating bath of nature and freedom. From this moment Vennedy's enjoyment of the beautiful scenery and his appreciation of the simple life of the village became intense.

Like most learned men, he had a thoroughly child-like nature, and he greatly amused Käthchen with his questions about many of the ordinary arrangements of the dairy and farm. The young girl got into a way of patronizing him on all occasions where common-sense was required. At times they talked together of the legends connected with the forests and lake ; here the professor took the lead, and became her teacher. Though but indifferently educated, she possessed a quick imagination, and an instinctive taste for poetry, which is common to the Southerns. Johanne Deissinger was much occupied with his business during the day, and it can hardly be a matter of surprise that a socially-disposed being like Käthchen was glad enough to wile away her hours of leisure in listening to Vennedy if she could get him to read her a poem of Schiller's, or an extract from Simrock's German mythology. Before a fortnight was over, Vennedy found that the unsophisticated girl was becoming a very intelligent companion, and a much pleasanter pupil than the raw youths at the university.

He had in his growing up seen very little of any womankind, except his old mother, and now finding himself domesticated with a young and very handsome girl, he began to reflect on the dispensation of Providence and the constitution of the world. It came into his mind forthwith that he would write a book about women. Käthchen had supplied him with the initial thought ; he had settled the title of his work ; it should be "Woman's Place in Creation." It was a grand subject, and,

after the manner of German philosophers, he determined to begin at the beginning. However, he never got beyond the middle of the first volume, by which time he had arrived at Eve's awakening in Paradise, to the mutual surprise of Adam and herself.

The book did not get on—but Vennedy always intended to proceed—and he contrived to seek inspiration in Käthchen's presence. It was very pleasant to sit by her side when she worked, and as a mere student of human nature, to watch her mobile countenance when he read to her from the poets, or told her stories from the Middle Ages.

One evening Vennedy was sitting according to his wont on the open balcony. Käthchen was seated near him, employed in mending the house-linen, and old Frau Keller, her neighbour, was helping with the work. In the way of companionship, womenkind never counted for much with Käthchen, so she was glad to have Max Vennedy to amuse her with his strange talk about the gods of the old times. He sat with his arm leaning on the rail of the balcony, his hand shading his eyes, which were fixed on Käthchen. The feelings long repressed in his youth, by penury and misfortune, were coming back upon his heart, like the inflowing tide. Meanwhile they talked of the forest trees, and he told her of the oak dedicated to Woden, that old god who loved the forest well; and of the linden tree once sacred to the Slavonic deities, and still sacred to those who believe that it can never be struck by lightning.

They talked on, while the glowing light of evening reddened the higher Alps with many-changing hues, and the valley was falling into shadowy twilight. While the mystery of darkness was stealing upon the world, a boat on the lake below was nearing the shore. When Käthchen saw and heard it touch the wooden pier she dropped her work, and, making some excuse about household matters, left the balcony rather abruptly. Vennedy, if he had thought proper, might have continued his lecture on the Sagas to Frau Keller, but he was not so inclined.

It was Johanne Deissinger who stepped from the boat, and he walked straight from the landing-place to the "Goldne Schiff." When he entered he found Käthchen looking as busy and demure as though she had no thought beyond house-work. He had brought her a small basket of Saibling—the beautiful fish of the lake. They were tastefully laid in green moss, and were covered with the blossoms of the primrose, which in some parts of Austria is called *Frauenschlüssel* (Our Lady's Key), because, suggests the poet, it is the flower which unlocks the spring. Käthchen was pleased to be gracious about this offering, and chatted with her lover in the utmost good-humour. She was always particularly gentle and good-humoured when she had been doing wrong.

The following day there was to be a fête in the village. It was now

May, and it was the ceremonial held in special honour of the Virgin. According to the custom of the place, there was to be a procession of boats round the lake; and though Johanne was a Protestant, he did not forswear a pretty spectacle, if accompanied by Käthchen.

The whole of that evening and the next morning the young girl was occupied with the grave question of toilette. Max Vennedy failed altogether to attract her attention, though he tried several times to do so in his awkward fashion.

Vennedy, without confessing it to himself, was wroth, and he began composing an indignant chapter on Eve's first sin—he resolved to get on with his book.

The day wore on, and every one was crowding down to see the boats go off. I know of nothing hardly so picturesque as the celebration of the Virgin Mary's Fête-Day on the Lake of Hällstadt. The boats, decorated with green boughs and garlands of flowers, proceeded in order from the pier—then slowly and majestically make the circuit of the lake. All the most gorgeous banners, all the most sacred reliques and images are brought into requisition. While the priests, in the richest robes, and the villagers, in their gala dresses, unite to honour the occasion. The procession moves to the solemn music of well-tuned voices, while far aloft the echo answers the song of earth, as if a chorus of angels from the pure snow-fields gave back the refrain. The elevation of the Host is announced by the firing of a gun, and every head is reverently bowed till the last reverberations are lost in the misty heights above. This was a day of intense enjoyment to Käthchen—she was pleased with herself and all the world; Deissinger was devoted, her new bodice was perfectly successful, and everything went well.

Vennedy, poor fellow, felt himself a stranger in this festive scene. No one in the village cared for him, and in the old German town where he was born he was a mere machine to grind up ideas—there was no one there to love him but his old mother. With his pale hatchet-face and his black coat, he stood like a shadow amid the gay crowd. When the boat returned to the pier in which Käthchen was seated, he hurried forward to assist her, but Deissinger interposed with an angry look, and taking her in his arms as avowedly his own possession, he lifted her to the landing-place. The stalwart mountaineer, with his fair burden clasped for a moment in his strong arms, looked down contemptuously on the poor scholar; from that moment there was hatred in the hearts of the two men. Käthchen gave a little coquettish nod of dismissal to Vennedy, and went off hand-in-hand with her lover; her merry laugh ringing a knell in his ears.

The townsman turned on his heel, and escaping unnoticed through the crowd, took the path that leads up the valley of the Waldbach-strub. The heart of youth does not keep time by the almanack. Vennedy had passed

an epoch in his existence in ten days; he had tested the pleasures of hope, the promise of love; joy, unknown before, had quickened the pulses of his heart; but now, like a sleep-walker, he had struck himself against a blank wall in his blindness, and was awakened from his dream. A dream it was then, after all, but a dream—that vision of joy, hope, love; henceforth and for ever the dull reality of existence had come back upon him. “Fool! fool that I was,” he exclaimed aloud in his agony. “Why did I leave my quiet home—the treadmill of my existence? Why did I break with the past? What have I, with my wan unlovely face, my bent body and wearied brain, to do with love? Käthchen, Käthchen, it will make me mad to think of you as the wife of another—lost to me for ever!” Thus he mourned and muttered, walking on, indifferent to all the rare beauty of the scene, till, at length physically exhausted, he turned to a green knoll, a little aside from the path, and flung himself prostrate on the earth. Nature is revengeful when she has been held long at bay—and philosophy failed the poor scholar now.

(To be concluded next month.)



## ARIOSTO.

ONE day in the September of 1474, when the peasant maidens were bending beneath the heavy spoils they had robbed from the vines that surround the walls of Rheggio, there was considerable commotion in the house of the governor of that city. Damsels hurried about, and smiled, and made grateful little reverences to the image of the Madonna in the entrance-hall. Noble ladies rustled in rich brocade up and down the wide staircase, and whispered together with faces full of pleased importance. In the kitchen the serving-men and pages drank deeply, and shouted loudly. In the dining-room sat the young governor, his outward ear employed in receiving the congratulations of his friends and relatives, and his inward mind fixed upon a chamber upstairs. The cause of all this excitement was that a child was born, and that child was Ludovico Ariosto.

Ludovico's father, Nicolo, was sprung from a race that had long, on account of its loyal service, been high in favour with the princes of the house of Este, and his mother, whose name was Daria di Malaguzzi, was a lady of no mean birth. When she came to her husband's house, Daria brought with her not only a rich dowry of bright eyes, and silken tresses, and silver girlish laughter, and golden ducats, but also a wealth of sterling virtue, and womanly tenderness, and sympathetic female intelligence, that made her, as it were, a rainbow in all the clouds of trouble that darkened the lives of Nicolo and their children; and that called forth in her declining years, from her illustrious son, words far more eloquent with the simple pathos of true affection than all the elaborate compliments he paid to the reigning beauties of the Court of Ferrara. With the voice of that gentle lady constantly breathing in his ear, and with the eye of his sterner father fixed upon him, the little Ludovico grew up. He was a thoughtful boy, who cared more for his book than his top, and who loved better to dream than to play.

Ludovico's first serious flight into the realms of fancy forms an interesting and pretty picture. The house of the governor of Rheggio is brilliantly lit up to-night. At one end of the large hall a small stage is erected, while Nicolo's study is turned into the green-room. There stands the mother, blooming in the summer of her matronhood, and arranging the head-dress of a pretty little girl, the *Thisbe* of the play, who by-and-bye, as the beauty of the family, will give her relations some trouble—as beauties will sometimes do. Four boys, one with a quiet, intellectual face; one with bright, inquiring eyes; one with a pensive cast of features; and one with a handsome, careless, open



countenance, are engaged either in preparing some stage decoration, or in repeating over their parts. In these four boys we can easily foresee Gabriel, the future scholar; Alessandro, the future traveller; Gallazzo, the future priest; and Carlo, the future courtier. Four smaller girls are engaged in trying to untie a knot in Thisbe's girdle; which, however, they, in reality, only entangle more hopelessly. But the centre figure of the group, and evidently the directing spirit among the four younger brothers and five little sisters, is a boy with a manuscript in his hand. He casts a quick glance at Thisbe's head-dress, and much mortifies that young lady by informing her that it is about as much classical as it is Chinese. He makes a gesture of reproof when one of the declaimers lays a wrong accent on a word. He reddens with anger, even beneath his olive skin, when one of his brothers, with fraternal and school-boy-like freedom, criticises something in the development of the plot. Ludovico is now beginning to taste the sweets and the bitters of authorship, for his first play of "Pyramis and Thisbe" is to be acted this evening by his brothers and sisters.

But though his father tolerated this playing at verse-making in Ludovico's boyhood, and was even rather proud of it, regarding it as a proof of the lad's quickness, he was a good deal startled at the way in which the youth's inclination for writing poetry increased with his years. A man who lived entirely by literature was, in those days, looked upon by all other professions very much as the Hippogriffe must have been looked upon by both birds and beasts. The respectable, narrow mind of Nicolo shuddered with horror at the thought of his noble race producing so nondescript a monster; and in order to avoid this danger he sent his son to Padua to study law, with a view to his becoming an advocate. Here, for five years, Ariosto (like many a poet and novelist, before and since his time) endeavoured to stifle the wondrous voices that were speaking in his heart and brain. His life at this time may be very easily imagined. On his table were ponderous law-books, the margins of which were scribbled all over, not with grave annotations on the text, but with smart epigrams upon his college companions. Sometimes he would try to comprehend an intricate legal case, but before he had got half-way through it he was sure to find himself turning the men and women connected with it into personages for the plot of a drama. Whenever he began to copy out a deed, it was certain to end in a sonnet. One day during this period, when his father was exhorting him to application to his studies, Ludovico listened with a docile silence such as he seldom displayed. The father was surprised, but at the end of his homily went away thinking that he had at last effected a change in his son's mind. His brother Gabriel, however, who was in the room at the time, and who suspected there was something behind, asked Ludovico why he had received the paternal lecture with such unusual meekness? Hereupon the young scapegrace burst out laughing, and confessed that

all the while Nicolo had been holding forth to him he had been thinking how exactly his speech would suit a father in a play he was then writing.

At length even Nicolo became aware that the inclinations of the true author can no more be fettered than those of the true lover. Ludovico was permitted to cease his legal studies, and was placed under the charge of the amiable and learned, and at that time, well-known Spoleti.

Spoleti was one of those men who are born tutors, and who seem to have a power to bring out all the finest qualities in the characters of the young; just as the fire brings out a writing in invisible ink. He soon developed what was best in Ariosto's heart and mind; and when, some time after, being sent to France as tutor to a Neapolitan prince, Spoleti died in that foreign land, his great pupil paid a grateful tribute to his memory.

When Ariosto was twenty-four his father died; and the accumulation of business which then devolved upon him as head of the family impeded for a while his literary pursuits. Having, however, at length despatched these affairs, he retired to a pleasant villa at his native Rheggio, and there, as he wandered in a garden listening to the murmur of the Rhodano, whose song had been his cradle lullaby, the "Orlando Furioso" first began to dawn in his mind.

This great poem was the work of Ariosto's whole life. It was not published till he was forty; and haunted by that longing after an ideal perfection which is so marked a characteristic of genius, he polished and re-polished parts of it to the end of his days. With regard to the coarseness of expression and somewhat loose morality which shock good taste and high principle at the present day in some portions of the Orlando, we must remember, in reference to the former, the comparative roughness of manners in that age, and in reference to the latter, the licentious lives of the Italian priesthood, which had, as it were, slackened all bonds of social restraint throughout the country. How could a poet speak in any but light terms of sins that were somewhat more than tolerated by a Sovereign Pontiff who was one of his patrons? That Ariosto could appreciate womanly purity of the highest type is apparent from some of his lines concerning both Bradamante and Isabella. Bajado had begun the story of the mad Conte Orlando, but he had only drawn the outline of a few figures, whereas Ariosto, with the Promethean touch of genius, put into them the breath of life.

The Cardinal Hippolito D'Este, who had been a friend of his father, offered Ariosto a place in his service, which he in an evil hour accepted. He was almost in a worse plight than was afterwards his successor Tasso in the same position. Tasso's patron appreciated the worth of the jewel which his Court contained, though at times he handled it roughly; but Hippolito could no more distinguish between a stanza of the Orlando and a strophe from a street-ballad, than a Devonshire clown can

discriminate between his own cyder and champagne. The Cardinal liked his poet to be admired, because he regarded him as his property; but why he was so praised he did not in the least comprehend; and when Ariosto read him part of the Orlando, his only comment was to ask him with a grin: "Where he had picked up so many fooleries?" How must the sensitive soul of the poet have shivered to its inmost fibre!

To do the Cardinal justice, however, he did his best to advance the fortunes of his protégé; and his brother Alphonso, the Duke of Ferrara, being about to send an ambassador to Rome, he persuaded him to entrust Ariosto with that mission. At Rome the wounded vanity of the poet was healed and soothed by the delicate flattery which Leo X. knew so well how to pay to artists and men of letters. Ariosto was about to kneel to offer the homage usually rendered to the Sovereign Pontiff on his first introduction to Leo; but the pope stretched out both his hands, and raising him, saluted him affectionately. He afterwards gave him several hundred scudi towards the expenses of the publication of his Orlando. When we see Leo doing honour to, and befriending genius, we must confess that with all his faults we cannot help loving him. At Rome, also, we may think of Ariosto as exchanging bright passes of wit with Raphael, and discussing deep philosophical questions with Michel Angelo.

On his return from this embassy, of which he acquitted himself most creditably, Ariosto found the Cardinal Hippolito just about to start on an expedition into Hungary, in which he asked the poet to attend him. But to laugh at dull jokes, to read aloud saintly legends at his Eminence's bed-side till nearly day-break, and to discuss gravely the flavour of a new dish or the cut of a robe, were not congenial employments to Ariosto, and such were the services required of the Cardinal's attendants. He therefore refused to accompany him, which led to a rupture between poet and patron.

On the death of Hippolito, which took place some years after, the Duke Alphonso sent for Ariosto and took him into his favour. The poet at first was cold and distant; but he soon found that the refined, highly cultivated Alphonso, was a very different patron from the exigent, sensuous Hippolito. It would be too much to say that the Duke understood him; but he left him alone, and that was what Ariosto liked.

Grafagnana, a district among the Appenines, being in a state of great disorder, and requiring a prompt and vigorous ruler, Alphonso made Ariosto its governor. In this office he displayed a considerable administrative talent, and before long brought the district into a comparatively peaceful condition. While there, he resided chiefly in a fortress among the mountains, and amid the wild magnificence of the surrounding scenery indulged in grand lonely musings. Man of the world, and

lively companion though he was, there was nevertheless a side to his character that made him love such scenes.

One bright summer morning Ariosto went forth from the gate of the castle to stroll in the surrounding woods. Deep in meditation, he wandered on, without noticing how far he was going from home ; until at length, on glancing around him, he found himself in a dense part of the forest that he did not remember ever having been in before. Thoroughly aroused now, he was beginning to consider which would be the way to turn to get back to the fortress, when several armed men issued forth from the shadow of the trees. They surrounded him, and in another minute he was in the power of brigands. The prisoner had about him no gold wherewith to satisfy the greedy hands that were stretched out towards him, and the robber-chief was beginning to press with vindictive significance the hilt of the stiletto in his belt, when Ariosto happened to mention his own name. Then suddenly the manner of the bandit changed from extreme insolence to the deepest reverence. The robber-captain declared that he esteemed it the highest honour to have spoken with the author of the "*Orlando Furioso*" ; and after having courteously offered the poet every refreshment which a brigands' cave could afford, he conducted him back to the gate of his castle with signs of profound respect.

At the expiration of three years, Ariosto gave up the government of Grafagnana and returned to Ferrara. The Duke Alphonso was then just about to send another special embassy to Rome, and he again offered Ariosto this mission, which was declined by the poet. The fact was, Ariosto preferred a quiet existence in his own house, where he could read and write, and associate freely with a few familiar friends, to a life of travel and adventure, and to the brilliant stir of a Court. He was a timid horseman, and always speedily dismounted, if the animal he rode showed the slightest disposition to restiveness. He was never comfortable, either mentally or bodily in a ship ; and, in short, he was a home-keeping, peace-loving, placid-tempered man ; as different from his cutting, slashing, irascible, restless heroes as can be imagined.

His habits during the last part of his life, which he lived in a small house near Ferrara, are described as having been extremely simple and abstemious. He ate only one substantial meal a day, and often drank no wine. He was very fond of working in his garden, though his ignorance in horticultural matters was so great that he would frequently mistake the nature of the seed he sowed, and find a crop of cabbages coming up where he had expected to gather a salad. He liked entertaining a few intimate friends ; but his pen was his dearest companion, and sometimes in the middle of the night ideas would crowd so into his mind, and the pictures which rose up before his imagination would become so vivid, that he would spring from his bed, and call to his old servant Gianni to bring him a light and writing materials. He wrote

at this time several comedies, which were acted with much applause, and greatly admired by the Duke and his family. Ariosto, however, seems to have thought that neither did Alphonso do enough for him, in a pecuniary point of view, nor did his countrymen value or honour him sufficiently. His favourite emblem of himself was a bee-hive full of honey, from which the bees have been driven away by smoke; but perhaps the nervous vanity which is so common among literary men and women, and which always inclines the author to think that adequate homage is not paid him, may have been more in fault than the Duke or the nation. In society, Ariosto's behaviour was most varied: sometimes he would sparkle like the very diamond of wit; and sometimes his friends would accuse him of being so abstracted that he did not hear what was said to him. Probably, however, when the men and women around him thought his mind was absent, he was in reality minutely studying their characters.

Nothing provoked Ariosto so much as to hear his own poetry misquoted, or badly read or recited. One day, as he walked along the streets of Ferrara, he heard a potter singing at the top of his voice some stanzas of the Orlando, portions of which had been set to music. The accent of the potter not being that of the purest Tuscan, he made considerable havoc among the finely polished lines. Ariosto paused to listen for a minute, and then in great wrath rushed into the potter's shop, and, with his walking-stick, smashed several of his jars. But the fit of irritation was only momentary, and a few minutes after, the good-natured poet was jesting with the potter, and telling him with a hearty laugh that, "as he had heard him damaging some of his wares, he thought it but fair that he should have a turn at his."

The women whose names are connected with that of Ariosto are innumerable; indeed, his heart seems always to have been in a chronic state of burning, produced by one lady after another. There was Ginevra, whose name he carved upon the trees. There was Madame Vespucci, who, though she had sons old enough to fight in a tournament, had nevertheless a hand still white enough to call forth in the inflammable imagination of the poet as he saw her at her embroidery, that beautiful simile in "Zerbino's Death Scene," concerning the purple thread on a silver ground. There was Alessandra, the mother of his two sons, Virginio and Gian Batista, to whom some authors have said that before her death he was privately married. This page in Ariosto's life is neither a very pleasant nor a very edifying one; but before we turn away from it with unmitigated blame, we must remember the corrupt state of society in which he lived. The "Romance of the Rose" had ceased to be a text-book among the ladies of Rome or Ferrara; and the facile dames and maidens of Italy, instead of keeping the flower of their reputation in the jealously fenced-round garden, exhibited it to all eyes under a thin glass-case, that was quite ready to be broken by



the first bold hand that might approach. It was probably the low scale of virtue among his countrywomen that caused something to be always wanting in Ariosto's female creations. He could not have drawn a Portia or an Imogen.

When, at the age of sixty Ariosto died, it was in the Benedictine Monastery at Ferrara, with the holy monks chanting round his bed ; and so highly did the Benedictines value the honour of his body being buried in their church, that they would never allow it to be moved from thence. The rites of the Church seem to have made him perfectly easy in his mind as to his past transgressions, before he died ; for he met his end with the utmost calmness, and spoke with joy of the many friends (among whom, no doubt, his mother was foremost in his thoughts) who were waiting for him in the eternal country. Let him that is without sin, in civilized, and purified, and Protestant England of the nineteenth century, cast the first stone on the grave of Ariosto.

Alice King.



TO MY FRIEND.

I THINK of that year so long ago,  
When I learned to love thee so ;  
The sweetness that scented the early spring,  
Ere the violets dared to blow ;  
Of its rare and rich October  
With its forests all aglow,  
And the spicy scent of the dying leaves  
That fell in the brook below,  
As I walked with thee in the maple groves,  
Sweet friend of long ago !

Oh, the love that grew ere the spring flowers blew,  
That tinted the brown November through,  
That kept perfume and carried its bloom  
Like a queen-rose wet with dew—  
Sweet friend, dear friend of the long ago,  
Abides it still with you ?

## BEHIND A SOFA.

I LIKE to creep away into corners and hide myself with the fold of a curtain, or half-open door, or behind one of the great painted fire-screens, or in the shadow of the tallest furniture. There I have odd little fancies all to myself, and wish things and dream things which nobody knows anything about. For I am different from all the rest; my parents are tall and handsome, and Louise is the prettiest girl I ever saw. Then, my brother Harry, who was killed in the Indian Mutiny, was like a prince in a fairy story, so brave and beautiful. But I! I am small and feeble. I cannot run or wrestle, and there is something growing on my shoulders which keeps me from standing straight, and they call me deformed. I shall never grow any more; strangers think me nine or ten years old, but when I count the years from the date in the family Bible, I find I am sixteen. People always speak kindly to me, with a great pity in their eyes, and once in a while I pity myself, but not often. I like to be this queer little figure. Louise is like the lovely ladies in legends and ballads, and I am like the imps and dwarfs; when I read about them I look at myself in the mirror, and make grimaces, and whirl over on one hand and then on the other, till Louise looks distressed and begs me to stop. Being what I am, of course I don't often go anywhere, except in summer when we leave town; and nobody makes me do anything; so I roam all over the house, and read, and lie with my eyes shut for day-dreams, and am merry and happy almost all the time. I wish I were only six inches high, what fun I would have in the world! Then when we are in the country, I could ride on the birds' backs, and down in the woods I could sit astride of the great lush toad-stools, and drink from acorn-cups—or by the sea-shore, I fancy I could launch a nautilus and sail away like any grim little sprite. However, to be four feet high has its advantages.

When Harry was wounded, and lay in the hospital, knowing he must die, he wrote a long letter to my father and mother, full of grief, and comfort, too; and then he told them a thing which surprised them greatly. How he was engaged to marry a girl in a town in which they had been quartered. How sweet and lovely she was, and how desolate she would be now: and he wanted them to send for her, and to love her like a daughter. I clapped my hands at that. I like to have people do things to interest me; and the idea of poor Harry having fallen in love! For I know very well what love is: I have read the "Faery Queen" all through, and a great many romances. And some time ago

I began a sly watch over Louise, on account of a certain Philip Rayburn coming to the house very often.

But about Harry's lady-love. My mother does not like strangers very well, but being for Harry's sake made a difference, and my father urged the plan. As for Louise, it seemed as if she could not be eager enough for the coming of this Miss Emily Grey, she was so determined to cherish and love her. For my part, as home is all the real world there is for me, I like to have as many characters in it as possible. So when we heard that Emily Grey was coming to England, we invited her to stay with us.

She would not come at once. She was timid, it seemed; or perhaps, Harry being dead, she would rather avoid his household. But Louise pleaded for her, and wrote her a great many loving letters, and at last Emily came.

Emily came. That first evening when they brought her into the parlour, I was lying under the table with my head on a hassock, thinking about the Old Man of the Sea in the Arabian Nights, and wishing I had been one of the genii of those days. But when Emily entered, I forgot everything else, and peered out from under the table-cover at her. What a dainty little lady she was! so pale and slight, she made me think of frail, fluttering, yellow butterflies; partly, I suppose, because of her yellow curls, which fell all over her shoulders when Louise took away her hat and shawl. Her eyes were wide, and pale and blue, her cheeks were colourless, and she had a frightened, deprecating way of looking up, even after my stately mamma had embraced her. But Louise kept about her, and cheered her, and talked to her, till she began to look brighter. Louise was so different, such a darling "nut brown mayde," with honest dark eyes and rosy cheeks, and lips always ready to smile. Louise is my beauty.

My father and mother went out after a while, and Louise still talked to her guest, while I lay very contentedly on the floor, all curled up just where I could see all that passed without turning my head. Louise went to an *étagère* at the other end of the room to get a little picture of Harry, and I idly kept watch of Emily. That moment she interested me; her wide pale eyes narrowed and grew intense, she cast a quick, furtive glance after Louise, and around the room, curving her little white neck, and a strange bright smile flitted over her lips. I thought instantly of Coleridge's Geraldine with the evil eye, and just for fun I lifted the table-cover and put my head and shoulders out so that she could see me. I am afraid I grinned at her. She shrieked and flung her hands before her face. Louise came running back, and asked what had frightened her.

"Oh!" she whispered, "such a dreadful face peered at me from under the table! There it is again!" And she shuddered.

"Charles!" exclaimed Louise, looking around, "come out, you

naughty boy, and speak to Miss Grey. It's only my brother Charlie, our pet. He is full of freaks. One never knows where he is."

Emily Grey looked at me like the saddest and sweetest little creature that ever lived, as I went up to her, and she reached out her small white hand to me, and said, in a low, musical voice: "So this is dear Charlie. I have heard of him. We will be friends, won't we?"

"Will you tell me stories?" I asked. She laughed merrily.

"Yes; heaps of them, child."

"Did you love Harry?" I asked again.

She shivered at that, and looked imploringly at Louise.

"Charlie, you are unkind," said Louise, reproachfully.

"Well then, I won't ask her if she loved Harry. I'll go off and read my book of hobgoblins."

"Oh, no! don't be vexed, Charlie," said Emily, with great sweetness. "Stay by me, and I will tell you a story." So I stopped, and she told me a senseless story of two girls who went to school. When I saw it wasn't going to amount to anything, I started to leave her.

"I don't like that," I said. "I like witch stories."

"Ah!" she replied, smiling, "perhaps this will be better." And then she told me a story of an old witch who had a throne down in the slime of the sea, with a string of bones around her neck, and a toad perched on each shoulder. And this witch bought souls, and gave people power over hearts in exchange.

"That was a good story!" I said at the end.

"And now, dear Charlie, go to bed," Louise directed. So I kissed my pretty sister's hand and glided off.

Emily very soon learned to be perfectly at home with us. She seemed to wind herself about the hearts of my father and mother, and as for Louise—Louise would have walked over burning ploughshares to do her service. I liked her about half the time, and the other half I felt like teasing her. She would grow so white and terrified when I sprang out at her from behind curtains or doors. More than ever I wished that I had fairy power, to change myself into all sorts of shapes—a tiny flea to hop into her ear, a yellow snake to twine myself with her curls, a mouse to run over her pillow, or an elf in her desk to open her letters! She was such an absurd coward. But being four feet high and not a fairy, I could only find my wicked pleasure in annoying her by constant surveillance and sudden starts. She seemed afraid to be angry with me, and never exposed me. Perhaps her conscience made her uneasy, for my dear innocent-hearted Louise never was startled or terrified by her dwarf Charlie's tricks.

Oh, slender, willowy Emily, yellow-haired Emily, my brother's darling! why were you not all Louise dreamed you, pure-hearted and true, sorrowing and loving? My father treated her as another daughter, and

declared she should never leave us ; my mother gradually came to consult her exquisite taste in all little matters which Louise formerly decided. And at last they even insisted on her putting off the badge of her fidelity to Harry—her mourning, despite the sad little shake of her head in remonstrance.

"She shall not make a nun of herself," exclaimed my father.

"My heart will be in mourning all the time," she whispered to Louise ; and Louise kissed her.

Spring came, and our mother commenced house-cleaning on a grand scale ; every room was visited, scoured and painted, and the furniture re-arranged. How she made the servants fly about ! Every one wished it well at an end ; every one but me ; I found too much fun in it. I rolled over on mattresses ; made nests to curl myself up in among heaps of blankets ; revelled in hidden relics brought to light ; perched myself on cupboard shelves ; read *Gulliver's Travels* undisturbed in the pantry by a jar of sweetmeats ; and a dozen times nearly tripped up our portly butler as he was carrying loaded trays up the stairs. When the raid extended to the sitting-rooms, I found unanticipated pleasure. The statuettes of bronze and marble had always looked at each other so unmoved from their different corners, that it provoked me. I had read somewhere in a German story of a house where the China figures of a shepherdess and a chimney-sweep made love to each other when no one was in the room, and finally ran off together. I was always hoping something of the kind might happen in our art collection, and now, when all the casts and figures were set down in a crowd on the great centre-table, it really seemed as if they could not keep silence. At night, when every one had gone to their rooms, a whim seized me to creep softly down stairs, and peep into the drawing-room to see what was going on among the bronzes and marbles. The moonlight lay across the table, and Clytie unchanged never breathed or moved, though a bronze Pan made mute music on his pipes before her, as motionless as she. Faust did not kiss Marguerite ; and Mercury, poised on one toe, did not catch at the chance to substitute the other foot. Altogether the assemblage was a failure. Have the fairies then never yet crossed the ocean from Germany ?

There was a low hum of voices in the kitchen below ; so, disappointed in my miracle-seeking, I thought I would slip down-stairs, and see what was going on so late. The butler, the cook, and the chambermaid, each stood, candle in hand, lingering over some dispute.

"Well, leastways," said the butler, "Miss Emily have a very sweet manner, and that's all I know."

"She have her own way, that's what she have !" said the cook.

"Hum !" interrupted Kitty, "she makes cold chills run over me. She's winding 'em all about her two little fingers, and she has the evil eye for certain. Mind you, she brings no good !"



Next morning, as I met Emily on the staircase, I stopped her and looked straight up at her face.

"What's the matter now, Charlie?" she asked, with a toss of her yellow curls.

"I want to see your eyes; please look at me."

"What for?" she demanded, without meeting my glance.

"Kitty says you have the evil eye for certain. What does she mean, Emily?" I asked, mischievously.

"I should think, Charlie, you might know by this time that what servants mean is not of the slightest importance." And she moved haughtily by me.

A week after, Kitty was dismissed. Louise pleaded for her in vain. She had lived with us for six years, and I asked my mother what fault she had committed.

"Emily has discovered her in some dishonesty," mother said, quietly. "I don't know what I should do without Emily."

Evidently, Emily was quite usurping Louise's place, but Lou didn't seem to mind, and loved her just as well. One day I asked Lou if she wasn't jealous. She blushed brightly, and said, with a shy smile—"Why, Charlie, if ever I should be leaving home, you know, I should feel so much better to have my place filled, so that they would not miss me!"

"I should miss you! I should miss you!" I exclaimed, clinging to her, and half crying. She bent and kissed me.

"My darling boy, do you think I should not take you with me? We will never be parted, Charlie. I could not bear any one to take my place in your heart!"

I suppose when she spoke of leaving home, she was thinking of Philip Rayburn, for I had heard several little hints and whispers lately, which made me pretty sure that some things were settled between them; and he came to the house oftener than ever.

When the reception-rooms were all arranged again, my mother disposed the furniture differently, moving chairs and tables and sofas to quite different positions, Emily advising her. One great, richly-carved sofa, with a high antique back, she insisted should be placed transversely across a corner.

"It looks so much easier than to have it stiff and straight by the side of the wall," she said. I chuckled to myself, for I foresaw a rare hiding-place, which might remain unsuspected for a long time if I were careful; and the next chance I had, when no one was in the room, I collected a few things in that corner for private delectation. I put the softest hassock there, and a Scotch plaid to lie on—one of my little chloroform bottles which I keep to smell at when I am nervous, and some of my favourite books. Of course I could not read in there, but just the laying my hand or my cheek on a volume makes it seem like a

companion, and brings its contents all into my mind. Such a snug little triangle as I made of it, shaded and secluded entirely by the high back of ancient carving, and the only light which could reach me there must crawl along the carpet, under the damask and fringe. It was very satisfactory, and all my own secret.

Emily began to be invited everywhere ; under mamma's chaperonage society received her with open arms ; bouquets and cards of invitation kept our little waitress doing duty at all hours, and gentlemen made calls of an evening, inquiring specially for Miss Grey. My mother scolded her for receiving them so coolly ; but despite the coldness, Emily infused some nameless charm into her manner which made them call again and again.

It was during these days that Louise and Philip had a falling out ; why, I did not know, but some trouble there evidently was. Louise grew sad and constrained, but made no confidant of any one, unless it was Emily. I would have cut my right hand off at any time to serve Louise, but she never asked me to serve her.

One day I heard her say to Emily : " You must see him when he comes this afternoon. I cannot ! And oh, *make* him understand that I never could have written those dreadful letters, and tell him that I cannot see him till he has faith in me again. It would break my heart to see distrust in his eyes. Oh, Emily ! " And my bonnie Louise bowed her head and wept.

It cut me to the heart, and I was so helpless to aid her ! For the first time in my life I regretted my peculiar *physique*, for other brothers were expected to defend their sisters, and did it ; but what could I, a poor dwarf, do to bold, athletic, handsome Philip Rayburn ? I felt very ignominious, and crept away to my corner and my chloroform, behind the sofa, for consolation, and there fell asleep in my misery.

I awoke suddenly at last, hearing voices. I am always on the alert, and never startled into making a noise, so I lay perfectly still and quiet to hear what was going on. Emily Grey was talking to Philip Rayburn in her characteristic, low, sweet voice, and I could imagine just how her lovely pale face looked with its great, sad, blue eyes, and her yellow curls floating over her shoulders.

" It puzzles me so," she said, hesitatingly ; " I cannot bear to believe that Louise wrote them ; and yet—what can I believe, Mr. Rayburn ? Oh, do not say you are sure of her guilt ! "

" Miss Grey," said Philip, sternly, " your affection must not mislead you. The letters were sent from this house, and the writing is undeniably that of Louise. She is afraid to meet the one she has so deceived and injured. Do not let your kind heart excuse her too far, Miss Grey ! "

Emily's voice trembled as she replied : " Oh, Mr. Rayburn, I cannot bear it ! To deceive *you*—you who are so true and noble ! She could not, indeed she could not ! "

Philip spoke in softer tones—" *You* pity me, Emily? The world is not all false, then."

A moment's silence ensued. Oh, if I could only have peeped out at them unseen, for I certainly believe that Emily bent her graceful head over Philip's hand and wept upon it. I was fierce with indignation, but perfectly collected. Perhaps the dwarf could help his darling after all.

Presently Philip rose to go.

"I suppose, then, we shall not see you any more?" murmured Emily, plaintively. How I hated that false, plaintive murmur!

"Hardly again," he said, gloomily. "And yet, Emily, I shall not wish to lose your friendship. In ten days I will call and inquire for you, and give into your hands the letters which I have received from Louise, and you can return them to her."

Then he went. As the street-door closed after him, Emily threw herself down upon the sofa, and with her face in the pillows, muttered very low: "I love him, and I shall win him now. And yet, and yet, his heart will never be really mine. Oh, cruel fate! Why was Louise ever born to spoil the only love I care for?"

And she writhed there upon the sofa in her malice, till she seemed to me like some creature of olden time possessed by a demon within, which raved and tore. I lay hidden away in my corner, thinking deeply, with a volume pressed to my cheek.

What was Emily plotting against my sister? I began to believe her capable of any Borgia scheme, and resolved to spy upon her unremittingly, and foil her where I could. How low I breathed, lest she, so near me, should catch a sound. Twilight shadows crept into the room at length, and in them she floated away, and I presently emerged from my lurking-place. How I wished I were an invisible gnome to chase her, and haunt her, and find out all her dark deeds! But I had to content myself with smearing phosphorus all over my face, and meeting her with a horrible grin in the unlighted upper hall when she came out at the ringing of the tea-bell. It did my very heart good to see the white terror in her face as she crouched back in a corner to escape me. I had appointed myself a Nemesis to punish her, but she did not know that.

I had noticed that when Emily went out alone to walk without naming her destination, she was always absent three or four hours. And the next day bringing an occasion of this kind, as soon as she was safely down the steps I went straight to her room and looked all about it. The white bed, dainty and pure, the drooping curtains, the flowers, the books, were all correct and maidenly enough, but I was a detective for the nonce, and passed them carelessly by. A small desk-table fastened my attention; I attempted to lift the lid, but in vain; it was locked. Still, the key, with a blue ribbon attached, rested in the key-hole, and I tried to turn it to unlock the desk, but it would not move—

the wards did not fit. The key evidently was not put there to help prying fingers. The next thing to do was to find the right key, and to that end I glanced curiously about. The recent reading of some of Edgar Poe's strange analytical stories sharpened my perceptions to painful keenness. I threw myself down in Emily's easy-chair, and leaned my head back in a position I had often seen her adopt. Then I narrowed my eyes and compressed my lips as she did when thoughtful, thinking that so, perhaps, my mind might momentarily take the turn of hers, and give me some insight into the mode of concealment she would be likely to practise. With my head thus thrown back, my eyes naturally fell upon the cornice above the long lace window curtains, and I distinctly saw, half hid by a projecting gilded grape-leaf, a bit of blue ribbon. Still keeping my features after Emily's fashion, the thought suggested itself to me how natural it would be to put blue ribbon on each of the two keys, that a spectator might never know that more than one was used. Full of excitement, I sprang from the chair, and taking the long gas-lighting rod which stood in the corner, I reached up and dislodged the bit of blue ribbon. As I expected, a key fell with it to the floor. With trembling fingers I tried it in the lock ; it turned easily, and I lifted the lid. That way at last I discovered Emily's treachery ! There on sheets of paper were words and sentences carefully written and rewritten dozens of times, in evident imitation of my sister's hand. Cleverly done, too. I looked them over hastily, and found beneath copies of two letters purporting to be from Louise to Philip Rayburn. I read them in a sort of delirious glee, for now I held the clue to the whole labyrinth in my hand. But what base letters ! In them Louise was made to avow her falseness to Philip—to confess that she never really loved him—that all had been a pretty farce to conceal her passion for another ; that remorse had seized her, and a determination to be honest at length ; so now these letters begged him to set her free and to keep her secret.

A shallow plot indeed, which a few straightforward words between the two would have set right at once ; but Louise was proud and Philip pitiless. Emily hazarded much, and had so far won, depending on the pride and the pitilessness. Then the handwriting ! It would have deceived my own parents ; but I—I, the cunning dwarf—had fathomed the whole, and held the proofs in my hand. Then came the question, what to do with them ? If I took them away with me, she would discover the loss at once, and take measures accordingly. Was the hour arrived for exposure ? I thought not. I determined to leave the papers, trusting to that fatuous blindness which so often leads criminals to retain the damning proof of their guilt. The justice of romances suggested itself to my mind ; you know the true will is always hidden somewhere undestroyed, the fatal letter always found, the deed or certificate lost for years but not for ever ; and I felt sure these letters

would wait for me. Was I not the servant of Nemesis? So I re-locked the desk, lifted the true key with its bit of blue ribbon to its hiding-place behind the gilt grape-leaf again, and placed the false key with its bit of blue ribbon also in the lock. Then I crept away to think it all over.

In the hall I met my sweet, sad Louise, with that new look of desolateness in her face. I kissed my hand to her. She stopped instantly, and winding her dear arms about my neck, said, softly—"You will always love me, won't you, Charlie?"

"Yes, I will, and every one else shall, too!" I answered, stoutly, at which her smile was sadder than tears could have been, and she passed on.

You may be very sure I kept close watch of the yellow-haired Emily during the days which followed. Many a lone reverie of hers had me for spectator, peering through a key-hole or the crack of a door, or with one eye bent on her from behind a curtain. I knew her reveries meant mischief. One afternoon my vigilance had its reward. My mother asked Emily if she would get her some violet silk when she went out, and Emily answered, sweetly: "I thought I should not go out this afternoon. I have a headache; but rather than disappoint you ——"

Of course my mother interrupted her with an assurance that she should not think of letting her go. A little after, I asked, just to see what she would say: "Will you buy me a little ivory skull this afternoon, Emily, if I give you the money? There's a man down an alley two streets off, who carves such things."

"I'm not going out, Charlie," she answered, shortly.

Under these circumstances I thought it best to be on guard in the drawing-room, so went quietly down, climbed over the back of the antique sofa, and so down into my lurking-place. There, with that horrible, fascinating book, "*Frankenstein*," under my head, I lay dreaming and waiting. Presently the door-bell rang, and Philip came, inquiring for Emily; only Emily. I heard her quick step on the staircase, and she glided into his arms—could it be that it was into his arms? a subtle instinct told me it was so. Philip's voice was changed from the old light tones, and there was no tenderness in it, though he called her "*darling*."

"Here is this package," he said, "which I wish you to return to Louise with my forgiveness. She will soon see her heartlessness has not destroyed my happiness!" and he laughed bitterly.

"Dear Philip!" murmured Emily's false, sweet voice.

"Emily, you are the only true woman I know, after all. My life shall be devoted to you."

"And you love me, Philip?" she asked, longingly.

"You know my love's not worth much; such as it is now you may have it, Emily," and his tones were reckless. "Let us have it over at once. Can you be ready to-night at eleven?"



"Yes," she answered, breathlessly.

"I will have a carriage here at that hour. When the clock strikes, you must come down to the door, all ready. You will find me there, and I will carry you away at once. A pleasant surprise to Louise, to-morrow morning, to find her lover so easily consoled! She hardly knows how frequently we have met."

"Do not marry me only from pique!" said Emily, with a touch of sadness which was real, I think.

"I simply ask you, Will you marry me, Emily?" was all his answer; and Emily said "Yes," without hesitation.

I did not want to come out and denounce them then and there; I had a better plan; so Philip went at last no wiser than he came, and Emily fled to her room, full of her plots; whilst I climbed up out of my ambush, and lay down as any one else might on the sofa, thinking my own thoughts. I wanted those letters now, quick too—how could I secure them? I could think of no opportunity till tea-time, unless fortune favoured. Fortune did favour about an hour after, for a young lady in silk and velvet came to call on Miss Grey. As the servant hesitated, not having received instructions, I called out from the drawing-room: "Emily is at home; she is up in her room. I'll call her."

So the young lady swept in and took a seat. In high glee I went up to Emily's room and rapped on the door.

"Emily, there's Flora McFlimsey down in the drawing-room to see you!"

"Tell her I'm not at home, Charlie."

"Oh, but I can't, Emily; I have already told her you were up-stairs, and I would call you."

"Then I suppose I must go down!" she said, in a tone of vexation, and came out, carefully closing and locking her door after her. So much the better! I knew another way to reach her room—by going through my mother's, and my mother had gone herself for her violet silk, so there was no danger of being waylaid. This plan succeeded, and I stepped boldly into the pretty chamber, where a subtle perfume of heliotrope pervaded the air. Emily had laid out all her dresses on the bed, and her trunk was open. I wondered if she would have the effrontery to send for it some time. But my business was with letters, not dresses, so I sought the little desk-table; the true key was in the lock this time, and in a moment I possessed myself of the fatal documents. How fortunate that Flora came just at that time, for it might be that Emily was about unlocking that desk to destroy the papers. My heart beat fast with excitement as I left the room again, by the same way that I entered, and hastened to my own little den, a flight above, bolting my door after me.

Then I sat down and wrote a letter to Philip Rayburn, telling him all I had heard, and all I had done, enclosing the sheets of paper as proofs.

I felt very manly at last, so to vindicate my sister's truth ; and it made me smile to be able to write that I expected him to apologize fully to Louise, and after that never to darken our doors again. I finished the letter, sealed it, coaxed the butler to deliver it at once into Mr. Rayburn's hands, and had ten minutes to compose myself before Emily politely attended her visitor to the door. Then she flew up to her room again.

My spirits ran so high, I could hardly keep from shouting my secret aloud. I found Louise sitting lonesomely in her chamber, like "Mariana in the moated grange," and I kissed her hand again and again, telling her I would set everything right, while she looked at me half-frightened, and wholly puzzled. Then I imitated an Indian war-whoop at Emily's keyhole, and as it grew darker lay in wait for her behind an open door, and sprang out at her when at last I heard her gliding step. I liked to see her shrink and shudder. At tea she was pale and thoughtful—while my father and mother, and Louise, grew kinder than ever, heaping her plate with delicacies, and delighting to pet her. But I took no trouble to pass her anything but strawberry jam, which I knew she hated.

The night was clear—there were stars in the heavens. After tea we all went into the parlour ; Emily played, and sang, and chatted, with now and then a restless glance at the clock on the mantel-piece. At ten, she said she would retire, and bade us all "good-night." That was the signal for a general departing, and before long I was going upstairs noisily, so that Emily might hear me and think all were out of her way at last. But no sooner had I slammed my door than I turned again, and crept down stairs quieter than any mouse, past all the sleeping-rooms, down to the drawing-room, and there I waited in the dark. I always like to stay in the dark, imagining grotesque creatures in every corner unseen, and there I lay on the sofa very contentedly, hearing the clock tick and my heart beat.

At last I became conscious by some instinct finer than hearing, that Emily was coming down from her room. The clock chimed eleven, and I began to fear my plot would fail, for why was there no word to me from Philip ? How softly Emily glided down, like some impalpable presence ! She stood hesitating an instant on the lower stair, when the door-bell rang a peal which startled all the sleepers.

I ran out with a shout. Emily would have fled from me, but I caught her hand and dragged her to the door, which I opened. There stood Philip Rayburn, his eyes ablaze with fierce indignation, grasping the fatal letters in his hand. He held them up before Emily ; he compelled her to recognize their meaning ; then casting them at her feet with a gesture of utter scorn, he strode into the parlour, drawing me with him.

I was proud then, as I collected all my four-feet-high dignity, and called him to account. He did not notice my manner though, he was

too full of wrath, and grief, and contrite love. I almost began to pity him at last, but remembered that would never do, so I told him that I accepted his apologies, but he must never insult us by his presence again. That moment Louise came in hurriedly, looking terrified and perplexed.

"Where is Emily, Charlie? Who rang the bell, and why is the door open? Oh, *Philip!*"

"I will go and find Emily," I said. "I will leave you with Mr. Rayburn. He has a confession to make to you, Louise, and after that you will forbid him the house!"

Emily was not to be found; I hunted for her above and below, but she was gone. The hall-door still stood open. She had fled away with her guilty conscience under the keen-eyed stars. So I went back to the parlour without her; Louise and Philip were at the door.

"I will come early to-morrow," he said, smiling brightly, and Louise smiled brightly too.

"What! have you not forbidden him the house?" I exclaimed.

"No, Charlie! That I cannot do!" And with an astonishing lack of spirit she let him fold her in his arms.

I have decided to have nothing more to do with my sister's love-affairs or the family dignity. My little part is played, and now I will hide away behind the curtain with my dreams of fairies and elves.



LOOKING BACK.

HAVE you forgotten the breezy downs,  
Where the lights and shadows play?  
And the purple haze of the distant hills,  
Lying westward far away?  
How the tinkling chime of the sheep-bells came  
O'er the slopes of the thymy turf?  
And the wind in the forest trees below  
Made a sound like ocean surf?

Have you forgotten the winding road,  
All bathed in the dreamy light,  
That shines on an autumn afternoon,  
When the days are calm and bright?  
When the florid richness of summer's glow  
Had faded from earth and sky;  
And the year grew old with a gracious smile,  
Like a saint prepared to die?

Have you forgotten the vine-wreathed porch  
Of the little cottage door?  
And the palmy days of your happy youth—  
The days that return no more?  
When the rustling leaves of the garden flowers  
Were hushed by the moonbeam's spell:  
And you lingered to whisper those parting words  
That I have remembered well?

Have you forgotten? I still believe  
You think of that pleasant past;  
And your heart turns back to the quiet scenes,  
Unchanged since you saw them last!  
God grant that the close of your restless life  
Grow calm ere its wanderings cease;  
And the better feelings of earlier years  
Return like the voice of peace.

SARAH DOUDNEY.

## A HANDFUL OF PANSIES.

BY FRANCES FREELING BRODERIP.

There is pansies that's for thought.—*Hamlet*.

WHEN Shakespeare put the words of our motto into Ophelia's mouth, he no doubt had in view the original derivation from the French of the flower's name mentioned; although in calling it the "paunse," Ben Jonson approaches more nearly to the spelling of the word "pensée," thought. It would be an interesting study to discover many of the baptismal registers of these "children of the sun and dew." I do not feel at all convinced that our brilliant but shallow-hearted Gallican neighbours originated this "flower's name." Their sparkling conceits and sentimental ideas are indeed legion—but it must have been some finer spirit, more deeply touched, and strongly strung, that selected this beautiful flower for the emblem of thought. Look at it well, and mark its glorious hue, the lustrous velvet of its royal attire, and then say if it is not the very *Porphyrogenerita* of flowers, the "Monarch of Thought."

In this case, though we are generally so felicitous in our flowers names, there is no English name so poetical, or so befitting as the pansy. Even John Bunyan's use of it in that grand old allegory the *Pilgrim's Progress*, cannot invest "heart's-ease" with half the beauty and significance of its French meaning. It is too regal a bloom in all its magnificence of purple and gold, "the shining pansy trimmed with lace," as Clare calls it, to be invested with such derogatory epithets as "Kit-run-about," or "Three faces under a hood."\* These are well enough adapted to those little wildling scions that country wights have called "Beady-eyes," and who go rambling about in a most utterly undignified manner, justifying their names. But the royal pansy must be a garden-flower, enriched and cultivated with care, before it will give to our eyes its own velvet vesture and queenly grace. By all means let us cultivate our soul's garden well, for it should be a garden, not a wilderness. Let lilies bloom in it everywhere, whose sheeny whiteness won praise from their Maker's lips. Hedge it in with the rosemary of memory and rue; but be sure to plant it well with pansies!

With its own symbolic meaning of thought, the pansy is also somewhat endued with a soft shadow, not necessarily of grief, but solemn and quiet, indeed grave, as thought should be. Milton, whose

\* The Germans call it "Stiefmutter," or stepmother, because two of its petals are purple and three yellow; like children of different parents in one family.



love for flowers equals that of Shakespeare, in the beautiful chaplet which he lays on Lycidas' tomb speaks of the "pansy freaked with jet," and that wild but original genius Edgar Allan Poe—who used his portion of the divine spark like a jack-o'-lanthorn—classes the pansy in Shakespearian fashion with rosemary and rue :

" . . . . . it fancies  
A holier odour about it of pansies.  
A rosemary odour  
Commingled with pansies,  
With rue, and the beautiful  
Puritan pansies."

"There's rosemary, that's for remembrance," says Ophelia, for the "ros marinus" or "dew of the sea," has been always consecrated to memory, and was therefore anciently used at weddings as much as at funerals. Rue, the "herb-o'-grace," earned its name by being the sprinkler of holy waters upon kneeling worshippers: "sour herb of grace, rue for ruth," as the royal gardener calls it in "Richard II." Rosemary, pansies, rue; Memory, Thought, Grace; a trinity deserving Laertes' commendation. "A document in madness,—thoughts and remembrance fitted."

To these her poor distraught mind adds fennel and columbines—of the latter, I can find no fact recorded, save the derivation of its Latin title from the eagle.\* Of the "fennel's bitter leaf," Longfellow tells us, in speaking of the cup of life that—

"Seed and foliage sun-embrowned,  
Are in its waters steeped and drowned,  
And give a bitter taste.

Above the lowly plants it towers,  
The fennel, with its yellow flowers,  
And in an earlier age than ours,  
Was gifted with the wondrous powers,  
Lost vision to restore.

It gave new strength, and fearless mood;  
And gladiators, fierce and rude,  
Mingled it in their daily food;  
And he who battled and subdued,  
The wreath of fennel wore."

Can no one instruct us a little in the poet's language of flowers? How is it that we have had Shakespeare's women portrayed for us by one eminently graceful writer; and their girlhood, by another kindred spirit; and yet no voice has been uplifted to describe and interpret to us Shakespeare's flowers? I think it is in that charming little story "Mrs. Clarinda Singleheart," that two children are set to make a garden with

\* Browne, in his "Britannia's Pastorals," says—

"The Columbine, in tawing often taken,  
Is then ascribed to such as are forsaken."

all the flowers named by the great poet in it. But this is not enough, we want a poetic concordance of them all; not botanic; Flora forbend! not the Eastern prettinesses or French sentiments; but a breathing living calendar chronicle of these "sweet nurselings of the vernal skies," as they were when he wandered on Avon's verdant banks, and through her meads and copses. Then did he gather these buds and flowers which he has preserved to us blooming so freshly, with a life surpassing that of those rustling, crackling, mummy mockeries called "immortelles."

He wore his flowers on his great human heart, as tender women clasp their children to their bosoms, and wove "an odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds" of surpassing beauty. He has painted for us with the pen, even as Noel Paton would do with the pencil, the "cowlips tall," the dainty pensioners of his delicate ethereal Titania, and we can almost see in fancy the tricky sprite decking them in ruby and pearl. He has limned in words for us,—

" . . . . . the daffodils  
That come before the swallow dares, and take  
The winds of March, with beauty; violets dim,  
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,  
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,  
That die unmarried, ere they can behold  
Bright Phœbus in his strength."

Time would fail were I to even enumerate all that bloom on his immortal page. And not to him alone are we indebted for them; for in his days, the fountain of Castaly was bejewelled to the very brink with blossoms. Spenser, Chaucer, Drayton, Herrick, Ben Jonson, Marlowe, Sidney, had all culled them into posies in turn. It must have been some of these earlier worshippers of nature, who wooed her at the inmost shrine, and christened in bright dewdrops these "darlings of the earth and sky," so aptly.

A poet of our own era has eloquently discoursed upon the old English names of flowers to be found in Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare, and we cannot do better than quote his words, "Oh, how sweetly they sound, look, and smell in verse, charming the eye and the nose, according to the Rosicrucian theory, through the ear! But what is a scutellaria macrantha to either sense? Day's eyes, ox eyes, and lippes of coves, have a pastoral relish and a poetical significance; but what song or sonnet would be the sweeter for a brunsvigia?"

"There is a meaning in wind-flowers, and cuckoo-buds, and shepherd's clocks, whilst the hare-bell is at once associated with the breezy heath and the leporine animal that frequents it. When it is named, Puss and the blue-bell spring up in the mind's eye together—but what image is suggested by hearing of a *schizanthus retusus*? Then again, Forget-me-Not, sounds like a short quotation from Rogers' *Pleasures of Memory*. Love-lies-Bleeding, contains a whole tragedy in its title—and

even Pick-your-mother's-heart-out, involves a tale for the novelist. But what story, with or without a moral, can be picked out of a dendrobium, even if it were surnamed Clutterbuckii, after the egotistical or sycophantical fashion of the present day? \*

In the same spirit we may ask, does the *arum maculatum* convey to us the same impression as "wake robin," or do we prize the little fairy hand-shoes, or folks' gloves more, for calling them digitalis? Away with them all, and let us have some one who will explain to us the several histories and mysteries of the flowers! One who will gossip to us about the traveller's joy, or virgin's bower—of the shepherd's purse, curds in cream, gold of pleasure, snow under the hill, goldilocks, fairy trumpets, lad's love, two pockets of money, love in a tangle, gilly flowers, Jack-behind-the-garden-gate, and soppes in wine! What a series of charming pastorals might we not have were this done!

There would be another charming investigation to make also, and in which every female reader or writer should be mightily interested, and that would be in ascertaining how it was that in some country places, the wild blue hyacinth came to be called "cuckoo's stockings!" The lithe elegant stem and drooping blossom would form a very quaintly pretty device—or monogram for some fair "blue stocking" of the day. Let us hope such a chronicler may be forthcoming, and then I trust the "pretty pawnee," as Spenser calls it, may be assigned its due place of honour among the rest.

\* "Mrs. Gardiner," by Thomas Hood.



## RESCUED BY A GHOST.

TRAVELLERS on the continent of Europe almost invariably spend some time at the town of Heidelberg, in the Grand-Duchy of Baden. The town is beautifully situated on the left bank of the Neckar, and forms a convenient centre from which the pedestrian may make radiating excursions into the surrounding country. To the north lies part of the district of the Odenwald, where stands, in stern supremacy, Melibocus, looking down on the hills at his feet. On his hard breast lies the Felsenmeer, or Sea of Rocks, where gigantic masses of stone seem to toss over one another in waves as tumultuous as those of the stormy Atlantic in winter. From the eastward of Heidelberg comes the swiftly-flowing, beautiful Neckar, through interesting and romantic scenery, and to the south again stretches the Odenwald to the far-famed Baden-Baden. Near the city are the gardens of Wolfsbrunnen, the favourite resort of the students and citizens. They take their name from a legend, that here, in days long past, a hungry wolf devoured an ancient witch; but in modern times they derive their principal interest from the magnificent trout, raised in artificial ponds, and other delicacies, which, if they call not to mind the witch, do certainly give to visitors the appetite of a wolf. But why talk of these? The chief attraction of Heidelberg, and that which above all else causes it to be resorted to by travellers, is its renowned castle—one of the finest ruins in Europe. And who ever went away disappointed with this glorious old relic of the past? What musty antiquarian, what practical man of business, with no soul for the beautiful—what crotchety valetudinarian, what supercilious "Foreign Correspondent," what fussy old maid or *blasé* pleasure-seeker (not to say poets and poetasters, sentimental young ladies and gentlemen, and artists), ever denied, after toiling up the ascent to the castle, that he was well repaid for all his labour and his journey from a far country by the splendours of the ancient edifice and the loveliness of the scene which lay stretched out beneath him? When the traveller, arriving in Heidelberg at night, takes up his quarters at the Prinz Karl Hotel, and after a comfortable night's repose (according to the German fashion *under* a bed) draws the curtains of his windows in the morning, and sees the castle, as it were, suspended over him, and the morning light setting it all aglow, it seems to him one of the golden castles in the air which his imagination has often reared. He fancies that he is still dreaming, that he is in fairy-land, and that this is the royal residence of Oberon and his queen. But the

absence of the superincumbent bed soon reminds him that he is not yet a fairy, and he hastens to prepare himself to mount the steep ascent and gain the lordly height. And when, after passing through the foundation-vaults, he arrives in the court-yard of the castle, peers down into the deep well which has provided for the wants of the garrison during many a siege; descends into the cellar and beholds the Great Tun which held wine enough to cheer their hearts for many a day; enters the vaulted hall, where armour and other curiosities are exhibited; peeps through the loop-holes whence the archers took their aim; inspects the moat, drawbridge, and portcullis; descends into the dungeons, or enters the chapel and the confessional where the lord was weekly absolved for all the errors of murder and rapine he might happen to have committed; and when he stalks about among the deserted halls, awaking the echoes and starting the bats from their hiding-places, he almost feels himself to be one of those knights of old who formerly held possession here. He steps with a firmer tread, puts on a lordlier mien, and feels personally insulted by an old gentleman (evidently a German professor) in green spectacles, and with a blue umbrella under his arm, whom he is sure to meet, and whose presence entirely dispels his temporary illusion.

I might descant long and fervently on the glories of this renowned spot, but let me now relate an incident which, though well-remembered and often narrated by the custodians of the castle, is not recorded in any of the guide-books.

I had spent a large part of the summer of 186—in Heidelberg, and had become familiar with every part of the castle and the adjacent grounds, for I spent almost my whole time in wandering about and investigating every nook and way which was passable. I loved especially to watch the sunset from the Elizabeth-garten, and then to walk about in the twilight, and feel the mysterious gloom falling down upon the ruins.

It was thus one evening, late in the season, that I watched the sun as he ended his daily course among the Vosges Mountains in the west. So bright were his farewell beams that I scarce noticed the dark clouds around, which however were so thick as to forbode a severe and sudden storm. I was returning home through the court of the castle when I observed, just entering the cellar of the Great Tun, one of those parties of travellers who are determined to see everything in as short a time and as business-like a manner as possible; for I saw them arrive that afternoon, and heard them say they were intending to leave next morning. Though I had seen the tun several times already, yet out of curiosity to hear their remarks, and attracted perhaps by the pretty face of one of the ladies, I accompanied them into the cellar. When we were in, however, I soon sauntered off to the farther corner of the spacious vaults, and became absorbed in endeavouring to decipher in the dim light some



of the letters which I found carved on an old wine-cask. So intent was I on this, that the time passed more rapidly than I supposed, and on giving up my task on account of the increasing darkness, I found the place deserted. Feeling somewhat fluttered at being left alone in a place so chill and gloomy, I hurried to the door, but, to my surprise and horror, I found it fast. I was locked in. I shouted with all my might, but when I recollected that the doors were doubled at a considerable interval, I soon perceived that this was all in vain. There were several small windows, but they were at some distance from the floor, and all opened on the precipitous side of the mountain towards the Neckar. Nevertheless I determined to endeavour to make myself heard through these, and summoning all my forces, gave a prolonged and repeated "halloa." I then listened long and attentively, but the only answer I received was the angry sough of the storm-blast. I waited awhile and again tried, but this time the reply was a vivid flash of lightning, and a peal of thunder which seemed to shake the castle to its very foundations. It was evident that all such attempts were useless, at all events while the storm lasted. I therefore groped my way to the farther side, and seating myself on a cask, with my back to the wall, endeavoured to content myself to remain there until the storm should be over. Notwithstanding my self-respect and ambition to be considered courageous, I must confess that the prospect of spending several hours in this gloomy vault was not without its terrors to me. I had entered out of mere curiosity; the portress had not seen me, and would not therefore think of me; and I was justly punished for not acting more wisely. The storm raged with great fury. The flashes of lightning revealed deep recesses of the cellar which I had not before been aware of, and the thunder peals seemed to shake the very rock on which the castle was built. I endeavoured to compose my mind to tranquillity, but the more I reflected the more uneasy I became. As I thought of the immense strength of the walls (some of them more than twenty feet in thickness), and that the inhabited part of the building was not immediately over the wine-cellar, I began to think that even when the storm should abate, the chances of my speedy exit were exceedingly limited. It also occurred to me that the wall against which I was leaning was that of the dungeons. In these dungeons not a few innocent beings had been confined and put to death by the former lords of the castle. Some of them were probably buried close to my feet. I thought to myself that were I a believer in ghosts I should certainly now expect a visit from one; but the more I endeavoured to recall my disbelief in apparitions, the more a sort of undefined dread crept over me, so that I closed my eyes and tried to banish in sleep all such thoughts from my mind. How long I remained in this state I was quite unconscious, but I was suddenly aroused by what appeared to me the sound of a footstep. I rose and opened my eyes. The storm had ceased, and the darkness at

first seemed like the plague of Egypt, but as my sight became accustomed to the gloom, what was my consternation to see dimly passing before me a tall form in white! What was this? Could it be a ghost? I certainly did not believe in ghosts. If there are such things, they must be mere subjective creatures of the brain. This, then, must be all imagination. I was confirmed in this decision, for when I looked again the apparition was gone. But after awhile, as I continued looking, the form again glided by me in the opposite direction. This time, I confess, I was really frightened. This could not be the work of imagination only. My hair stood on end, and I trembled like a leaf, but this time I determined to speak to it, and summoning up all my fast-retreating courage, I cried out in a voice hoarse with terror: "What art thou?" The words were no sooner out of my lips than the form vanished with an unearthly shriek, which reverberated through the vaults, followed by a dull crash as of something falling to the ground. I was now in a complete dilemma. If it were a ghost, I was relieved of its presence; if not a ghost, what was it? Had any of my acquaintances known of my presence here, they might have been tempted to play me a trick, but I was sure no one knew of my whereabouts. After reasoning in this way, I at last determined to put forth one great effort to make myself heard, so I set up such a shout as I should have considered myself incapable of before. But it had the desired effect, for soon a light appeared, and a man entered the cellar. And now the entire mystery was solved. In the middle of the floor lay a young girl dressed in white in a deep swoon. By her side were the fragments of a large pitcher, and around her a pool of red liquid, which resembled blood. The man was surprised enough to see me, and I believe thought at first that I had murdered his daughter; but judging, I suppose, from my respectable, though somewhat bewildered appearance, that I was harmless, he handed me the light, and taking his daughter in his arms, carried her to his apartments, myself following. Our first care was of course to bring the girl to her senses, in which we soon succeeded—then followed the explanations. I first informed the family of my unintended incarceration, my attempts at liberation, and the supposed apparition. The daughter then told us that having been sent to the cellar to draw some wine, her light had been extinguished just as she opened the door of the vault; but she had not thought it worth while to return for a light, and had proceeded to draw the wine in the dark. But as she was returning she was terrified by the voice of a hobgoblin near her, which caused her to fall down in a fainting fit, and break the pitcher she was carrying. The father then congratulated me on my not having passed the whole night in the cellar, as my voice could not have been heard in the house above. Wondering at his daughter's long absence, he had come to look for her, and had then hastened his steps on hearing my

voice. He made me many apologies for my detention, and so did his elder daughter, who had locked me in. With these, of course, I was obliged to be satisfied. The custodian had been having company that evening, which accounted for wine being wanted at that late hour, and for the girl being dressed in white. After a draught of wine to strengthen my spirits, I was escorted by some of them to my lodgings. It was some days before I recovered from the effects of the excitement I had undergone, and I shall never forget the evening I spent in the vaults of Heidelberg Castle.



## ÆOLIE.

WILD wind that rageth o'er the sea,  
With biting fang and dreadful cry,  
What storm-bent creatures plead to thee,  
To spare them lest they sink and die !  
With voice of sullen wrath  
Thou leapest on thy path,  
O'er wreck and found'ring ship,  
'Mid cries from seaman's lip ;  
Cast out like scattered tares,  
With women's sobs and prayers ;  
Thy home the waters darkly blue  
All the bitter winter through.

Soft wind that roameth to the sea,  
With tender touch and soothing sound,  
A thousand voices sing with thee,  
Upon thy tuneful, fragrant round.  
With gentle sigh of love,  
The coo of mated dove,  
Where bees still droning sip  
The honeyed petal's lip ;  
Thy breath a fresh perfume  
Of flowers' sweetest bloom ;  
Thy home the heaven's sunlit blue  
All the joyous summer through.

WILLIAM DUTHIE.